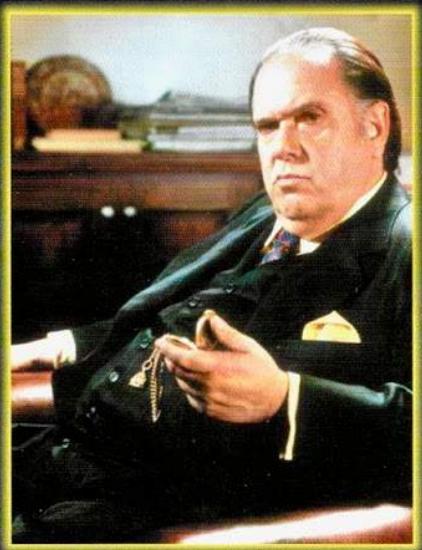


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COVER: Norman Saunders' cover art for the May 1938 issue of *Complete Detective* and Maury Chaykin as Nero Wolfe 2002).

Scarlet Letters

Scarlet Street continues to surprise. Terry Pace's article on the elusive Harry Alan Towers in #44 is to be cherished, especially with its introduction from the pages of the Scarlet Pimpernel. I had my first contact with Harry in the 1950s when he had made a television film of James Birdie's *The Anatomist* in England. It starred Alastair Sim as Dr. Knox, with George Cole, Michael Ripper, and Adrienne Corri. The names of the producer, director, and writer were all quite unfamiliar. Probably they were all Harry Alan Towers! I bought the American distribution rights via his agent in New York and a company he had in Canada; we never met until some 20 years later at a film festival in Cannes. I am looking forward to hearing about the new Fu Manchu series in your next issue; by the time it's published, Harry will quite likely have the first film completed!

I love David Kalat's appreciation of the adventures of Fantômas, and particularly the quote from Edward Gorey. Maybe David is about to bring us Fantômas on DVD, like he has done previously with Doctor Mabuse. We also owe him a debt of gratitude for rediscovering the Anglo-French gangster classic, GUNMAN IN THE STREETS, which costars a young and beautiful Simone Signoret with Warner Bros.' contract player Dane Clark and the famous French actor Fernand Gravet, who is probably best remembered in America as Johann Strauss in MGM's musical extravaganza THE GREAT WALTZ. Frank Tuttle's direction of the final battle between the French police and international gangsters in the streets of a French city is vintage Warner Bros. of the Edward G. Robinson and James Cagney era.

Does Leonard Kohl's review of the Mike Hammer Collection reprints pre-sage a return of Mickey Spillane's film noir hero to the big screen? It would be a welcome relief from the endless stream of sci-fi and martial-arts "thrillers" that have lately been flooding the cinemas. The author himself last played Mike Hammer in the British-made THE GIRL HUNTERS, which costarred Lloyd Nolan and Shirley (GOLDFINGER) Eaton.

Scarlet Street certainly must be doing something right, or prestigious DVD labels like The Criterion Collection and Kino Video would not be joining its list of advertisers.

Richard Gordon
Gordon Films, Inc.
New York, NY

Thanx as always for writing in, Mr. Gordon, and thanx especially for the kind words. We think we're doing something right, too!

Maybe I shouldn't say this, but I'd rather read *Scarlet Street* than most books. Issue #44 is no exception, and I was

thrilled to read Richard Valley's Fu Manchu article. Though the character is definitely politically incorrect—that is, riddled with bigotry, a negative depiction of an Oriental by an Occidental—it continues to fascinate as horror, and as emblematic of the not-so-good but more colorful, engrossing old days. Besides, Fu Manchu can be seen as the flip side of good guy Charlie Chan. (How about a new Chan movie with, say, John Lone or Yow Chun-Fat or even B.D. Wong?)

Second, I've relished the series of articles on She Who Must Be Obeyed. After we saw the 1965 movie starring Ursula Andress, my brother read me Rider Haggard's eerie novel. Thanks, too, for the coverage of the latest remake. Like most recent remakes, it doesn't tempt me; I prefer to read the *SS* article rather than be disappointed by a new, bland version without the star power of the 1965 (or the 1935, for that matter) one.

Third, an excellent point in Jon Anthony Carr's book review of *Behind the Screen*. The author of this latest book on gay Hollywood does toot his own horn repeatedly, and deliberately ignores those who came before him. Everyone seems to forget that the first book on gays in films was in the early seventies, via the late Parker Tyler. In the eighties, there was the late Vito Russo's *The Celluloid Closet*, and in 1993 my brother Boze Hadleigh's *The Lavender Screen*, which had several printings and, in December 2001, came

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Frankie Thomas



out in an updated edition with 10 new chapters. In fact, my brother has published more books on gay (and lesbian, also on bi) Hollywood than any author: six books. The first, in 1987, was *Conversations With My Elders*, due in mid-2002 in a retitled reprint, *Celluloid Gaze*. And let's not forget the work on gays in cinema via Richard Dyer in Hollywood.

It's a shame that some authors, homosexual or heterosexual, feel an insecure need to beef themselves or their books up by ungraciously withholding credit where it is due. My brother also did the book *Hispanic Hollywood* (a first on the topic) via a familial pseudonym—as we are one-quarter Hispanic. Years later, someone else did a book on the topic, titling it *Hispanics in Hollywood*, no doubt hoping to cash in on its predecessor's success. Alas, that author claimed his was "the first" on the subject. Anyway, my brother's book is the basis of a late-2002 TV documentary co-funded by HBO, titled *THE BRONZE SCREEN*.

One learns so much—most of it fun and positive!—from the pages of *Scarlet Street*. Also, may I note that as a heteromantic female, I—like so many others, I'm sure—enjoy the occasional beefcake shots scattered (tastefully) through your magazine. Keep it up—I mean, keep up the good work and the articles (yes, the photos too). Reading matters!

Linda Fresia
Vancouver, Canada

Reading matters and that's just what we are—reading matter! And we're happy to hear that *Conversations With My Elders* (under its new title) is scheduled for reprinting; it's a fine, fascinating book.

Scarlet Street #44 was another great issue. The thrills started before page one, with the advert from VCI—I mean, right there, coming to DVD was/is TARGET EARTH and HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM. That just made my wee heart race faster, that advert did.

Of course, I then immediately skipped the table of contents, because I like to be surprised when I read *SS*. I don't like to know what's coming when I read *Scarlet Street*. I do always enjoy THE NEWS HOUND, and, of course, I always enjoy that photograph of Tab Hunter with a weiner and Roddy McDowall with a fudge cake. I'm also happy to see that you're doing more DVD reviews, which

Continued on page 8

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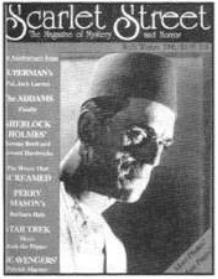
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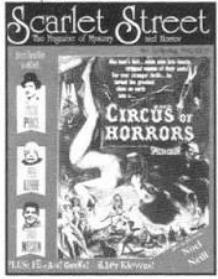
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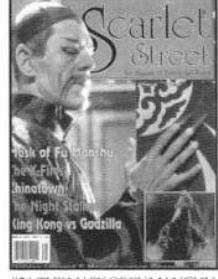
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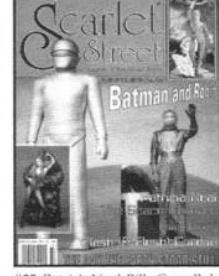


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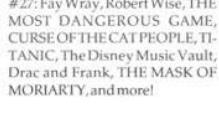
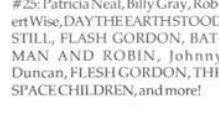
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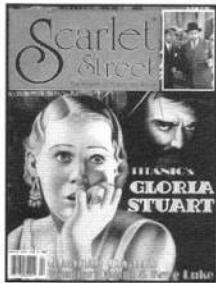


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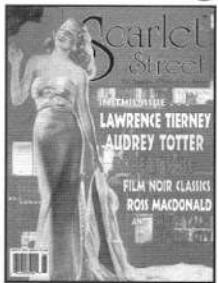
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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

are always informative and appreciated. And it's nice to see you're branching out with your inclusion of the Western DVD reviews.

The Harry Alan Towers interview was scads of fun, especially the photo on the bottom of page 41. Let those who say you have an agenda chew on that for awhile. (May I ask a question? Is the photograph on the bottom of page 53 Peter O'Toole as She?) But imagine my surprise and delight when I discovered David Kalat's wonderful and long-overdue tribute to Fantomas. That is the kind of article that makes *Scarlet Street* the best there is! Congrats to Mr. Kalat on a great job.

I also feel it necessary to point out to you that, on page 66, there is a photograph of male butt cheeks. I am certain this was an oversight on your part. In any case, you *Scarlet Street* people deserve high praise indeed—the quality and content of your magazine never fail to delight and inform. There, I've said it and I'm glad!

By the way, has anyone pointed out to you that, on page 66, there is a photograph of male butt cheeks? Just asking.

Bruce Kimmel
Studio City, CA

Must be your imagination, Bruce; we searched for butt cheeks for hours on end and saw no such thing! Clearly, being responsible for THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL (see page 58) has made you see nekkid people where none exist . . .

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The moment I saw that the current edition of *Scarlet Street* (#44) included coverage of HORATIO HORNBLOWER I expected to find uncoverage—in fact, a nude shot of Ioan Gruffudd—and yes, there it was! Not that I'm complaining, mind . . .

Peter Nelson
London, England

Lelia Loban replies: *Though the most obvious ass-aspect of the photo does sort of stare the camera in the face, there's a less-naughty reason for including it with the article. Look at the sailor looking at Hornblower. Hornblower's giving those men a considerably racier view of himself than the audience gets. They're not exactly looking the other way. Nobody's holding up a sheet to preserve his modesty, and he's certainly not doing anything to cover himself up—au contraire, he's standing there with his arms raised and out to his sides, and seems to be looking in the direction of the man who's watching him so intently. A wider angle of that scene would show not just that gent but a much larger group of men, all with a full frontal view. That scene makes it clear (to me, anyway) that it's no stretch to read some gay implications into this version of HORNBLOWER.*

Scarlet Street is absolutely amazing! Where others flail helplessly, you've succeeded in broadening your scope without sacrificing your focus. The reason? *Scarlet Street* has always had a unity of purpose—smart, incisive, and witty articles and interviews that are miles beyond lesser periodicals in terms

of sophistication. Whatever the specific topic—Westerns, cartoons, criminal masterminds, the high seas—it's treated in the same savvy style as your ruminations on mystery and horror. *Scarlet Street* flatters its readers; it credits them with sharp intelligence and open minds instead of narrow provincialism and hollow skulls.

Your coverage of HORATIO HORNBLOWER in *Scarlet Street* #44 is a perfect example of what I mean. The layout was gorgeous, and the analysis of the show's sexual subtext was reasonable and convincing. By the way, the caption referencing the photos on page 64 (Ioan Gruffudd, top; Jamie Bamber, bottom) can't be accidental, can it?

If George S. Kaufman, Moss Hart, and Cole Porter had ever collaborated on a magazine instead of on Broadway, that magazine would be *Scarlet Street*!

Jeffrey Hough
Baltimore, MD

Scarlet Street should be ashamed of itself for ever suggesting that the characters in HORATIO HORNBLOWER were carrying on a homosexual affair! I've read many books and no one ever did that!

Jim Lochte
Cleveland, OH

Jeff Allen's interesting review of THE BRIDE WORE BLACK (*Scarlet Street* #44) revives the often-asked question: did one of the world's greatest directors, François Truffaut, ruin Cornell Woolrich's most fa-

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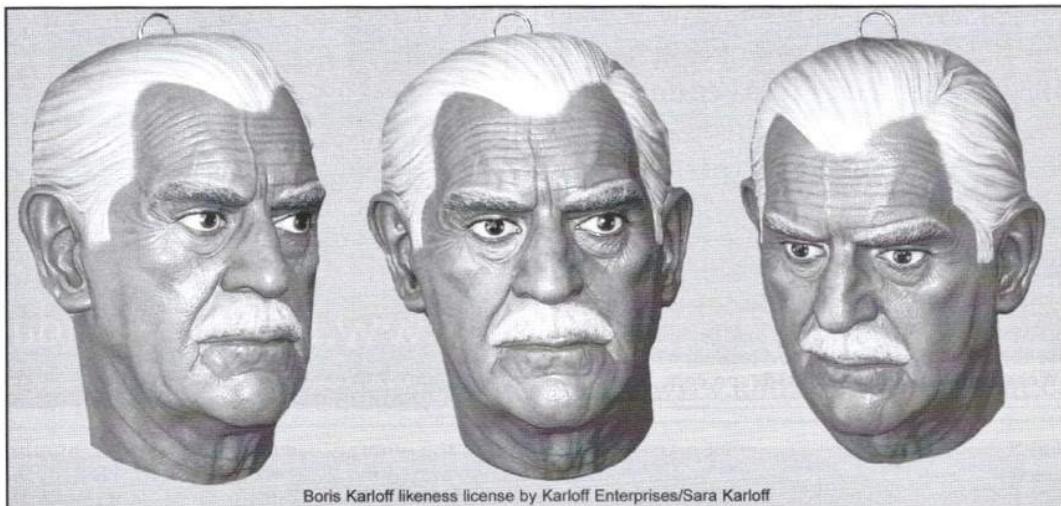
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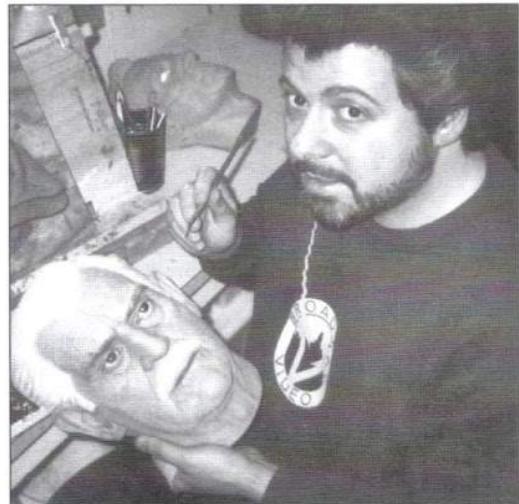
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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 8

mous novel? Since I've been a lifelong admirer of the films of François Truffaut, I'd like to chime in with my own opinion.

THE BRIDE WORE BLACK is a classic of pulp fiction, written in a highly innovative format—each of the five chapters centers on Julie's differing strategies to ensnare male victims—and is blessed with Woolrich's own brand of shorthand. No fussy prose for this man—the book is propelled by a breathtaking pace, mirroring the driven ingenuity of Julie's mind. In the novel's famous last chapter, Woolrich lets us know in no uncertain terms that we are merely the playthings of the Gods—malicious, malevolent Gods.

Truffaut made many changes in his adaptation. He changes the locale from New York City and environs to France and Switzerland. He completely eliminates the obsessed detective, Lew Wanger, who is always on Julie's trail. And he throws the famous last chapter out the window! Naturally, much of the ingenious plotting of the original is gone, too. What remained had, out of necessity, to be telescoped for the film. (Particularly missed is the mesmerizing buildup in the Frank Moran killing to the "inescapable fact" that the kindergarten teacher, Miss Baker, is the murderer and, therefore, must be the real Julie Kileen.)

Yet, despite all these differences, Truffaut is very faithful to the spirit of Woolrich's original. He captures the single-minded hatred of a murderer, and he

even manages to humanize the woman when he reveals her "secret" at midpoint (and not at the end as Woolrich did in his original). As in the novel, Truffaut captures Julie's desirability to four of her victims, which certainly makes for an ironic twist to the action, and even increases it noticeably with the love confession of her fourth victim (the painter played by Charles Denner).

Sorely missed is the novel's original conclusion—the fact that Julie doesn't kill her last victim, because he is actually being impersonated by Lew Wanger, who tells her that her victims did not kill her husband. Still, Truffaut came up with an ingenious conclusion of his own, which still indicates that we are indeed the playthings of the Gods.

In Terry Pace's intriguing article/interview, THE ELUSIVE HARRY, he mentions one of Anthony Perkins' last films, EDGE OF SANITY, which Harry Alan Towers actually produced with Edward Simons. This wildly stylish thriller, which was directed by Gerard Kikoine, has such a devilish conceit—it crosses the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde with the story of Jack the Ripper. Then, it goes on to even further inspiration—Dr. Jekyll becomes Jack Hyde/The Ripper because he's found a way to "freebase" a new experimental drug, cocaine. It's all brilliantly wrapped in an EQUUS-like childhood trauma that involves both sex and horses!

The film is dominated by the skill and daring of Anthony Perkins, who brings conviction to the sexually-charged proceedings. His Dr. Jekyll is a frail man, im-

maculately tailored, humorless, and obsessive. His Mr. Hyde is a wildly decadent individual who always plays with his victims before he kills them. For this knockout performance, Perkins received only \$660,000. He should have received twice that, because he certainly delivered on the film's ad tag line—"Double the Terror. Double the Fun!"

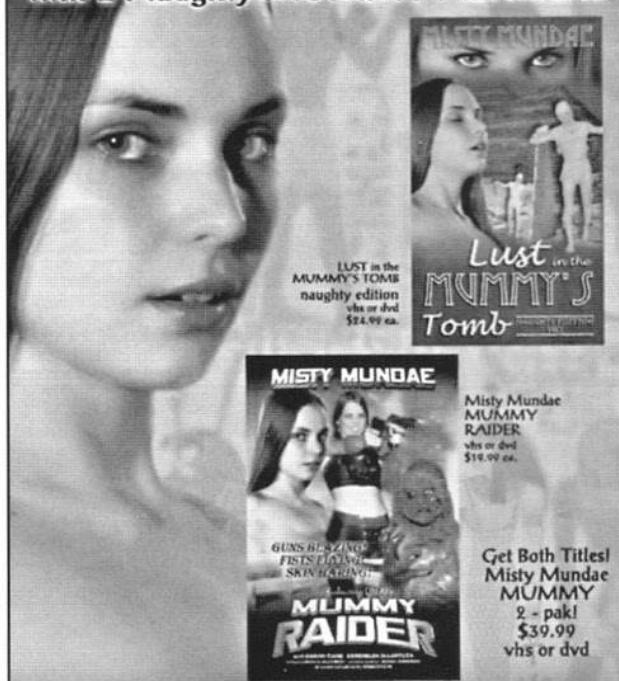
Raymond Banacki
Brooklyn, NY

In recent months you couldn't pick up a newspaper or magazine without finding Christopher Lee chatting merrily away about his much-deserved, late-in-life celebrity in THE LORD OF THE RINGS and STAR WARS. David Del Valle and Richard Valley's interviews with the great Hammer horror star (SS #44), concentrating on such familiar roles as Fu Manchu, Count Dracula, The Mummy, and Baron Frankenstein's Creature, were a welcome break from Saruman and Count Dooku. The interviews, conducted at key points in the actor's life, help "explain" Lee in ways I never thought possible. It's fascinating to witness Lee justify his choice to abandon Hollywood during the time when his career was largely stalled in such trite fare as THE HOWLING II. Just as intriguing are his ruminations on Holmes, his return to the role in 1991 being largely ignored by all but Scarlet Street. (Profound thanks to SS for reprinting this super-rare stuff; I'm definitely among those who can't man

Continued on page 14

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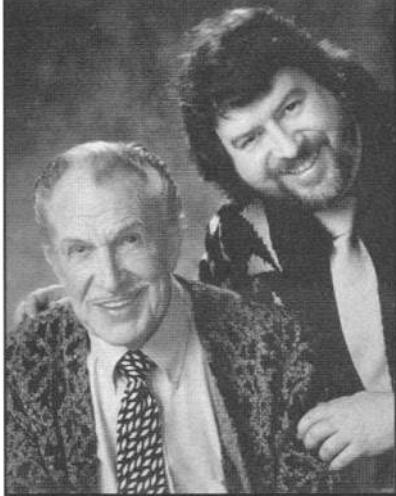
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Frankly Scarlet

Good evening Mr. and Mrs. North and South America and all the ships at sea! Let's go to press!

Recently shuttered on the Great White Way was the muckraking musical *SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS*, based on the 1955 movie of the same moniker. Both the Hollywood and legit versions were inspired by the life of legendary gossip monger Walter Winchell, he of the staccato "dot dot dot" delivery in print and over the airwaves. The flick was a feather in the cap of toothy Burt Lancaster, who produced and starred. The stage show—starring John Lithgow, who I met back in the mid-seventies when he was playing Lana Turner's warlock brother in a touring production of *BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE*—shuttered to the tune of a \$10 million loss.

Scarlet Street's own News Hound gets to follow in Winchell's dotty tradition in each and every issue of our pulsating publication, and Frankly, Scarlet, Ye Reditor's a little jealous of our canine columnist. With that in mind, I thought I'd contribute a few dots of my own this issue and catch up on this and that, beginning with an item of vital this . . .

Forty Flash! Since 1996, *Scarlet Street* has had the great good fortune to count among its many renowned staffers (the very best in film scholarship) the one and only Forrest J Ackerman, creator with James Warren of the Baby Boom Bible of Monster Mags, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. (Don't confuse it with anything currently masquerading under the same logo.) We came close to losing Uncle 4E this past spring (as did the world), when he was

rushed to Kaiser Permanente Hospital in LA with a blood clot on his brain. Immediate surgery was performed and—the name being Ackerman, not Donovan—the brain was left intact but the clot successfully removed. Therapy began at Kaiser and, on April 15, Forry was transferred to Daniel Freeman Memorial Hospital for rehabilitation. There he made great strides toward recovery, but, on the evening of April 26, an infection coupled with pneumonia put Mr.

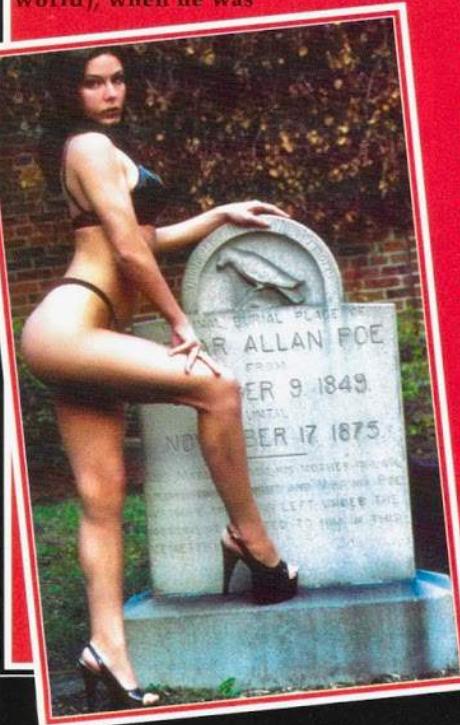
Monster very close to death. It was touch and go for 72 hours, but Dr. Acula (how many nicknames does this man have?) pulled through. As I write this, Forry is once again home at his beloved Ackermansion, where he will require much rest and therapy and the good wishes of his legion of fans. Cards and letters can be sent to Forrest J Ackerman, 2495 Glendower Avenue, Hollywood, CA 90027. Look for Forry to be back on the Street with his *CRIMSON CHRONICLES* this fall.

With seats on Broadway selling for what used to be the budget for an entire show, it's time to remind Scarlet Streeters that other real live the-ayter entertainment is out there at a fraction of the cost. Recently, Man Aging Editor Tom Amorosi and I attended Fair Lawn, New Jersey's Old Library Theatre production of John Dempsey and Dana P. Rowe's *ZOMBIE PROM*, a fab fifties-styled musical starring Kimberly Griffin as a high-school good girl and George Adamo as the bad boy who throws himself into a nuclear reactor and comes back a crazy mixed-up zombie. It's a cool show, and Pat Phillips added immeasurably to the fun as Miss Delilah Strict, the Principal with a Past . . . There was something extra extra special about this year's Theatre World Awards (arranged yearly by our own Tom Lynch and Barry Monush), which were held the day after the Tonys and were much more entertaining. Among the guests were two winners of the very first Theatre Worlds—John Raitt (the original Billy Bigelow of *CAROUSEL*) and Bambi Lynn (the Dream Laurie of *OKLAHOMA!*). Award presenters included Laura (TALES OF THE CITY) Linney, Joanna Gleason (a charming Nora Charles in the ill-fated musical *NICK & NORA*), Rosemary Harris (currently onscreen as Aunt May in *SPIDER-MAN*), and Judy Kaye, who some years ago performed the definitive version of Stephen Sondheim's "I Never Do Anything Twice" for *SHERLOCK HOLMES: CLASSIC THEMES FROM 221B BAKER STREET*, a CD produced by Bruce Kimmel. (I penned the liner notes and helped choose the music, and Tom Amorosi suggested the song.) . . .

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TOP: Bespectacled Forrest J Ackerman poses with the Brides of Poe—Elizabeth Shepherd (1965's *TOMB OF LIGEIA*), Joyce Jameson (1962's *TALES OF TERROR*), and Barbara Steele (1961's *PIT AND THE PENDULUM*)—along with Reggie Nalder (1956's *THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH*), David Del Valle (whose Christopher Lee interview concludes this issue), and Angus Scrimm (1979's *PHANTASM*). SECOND FROM TOP: The zesty cast of *ZOMBIE PROM*, all dressed up and ready to party. THIRD FROM TOP: The zesty cast of *IN MY DREAM I SEE DANCING NAKED MEN*, all undressed and ready to party. FOURTH FROM TOP: John Raitt and Bambi Lynn at this year's Theatre World Awards. BOTTOM LEFT: Young and beautiful Alexxus Young isn't a Bride of Poe, but she still likes to drop by for a visit.



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SCARLET LETTERS
Continued from page 10
age \$100 for the rare issue where it first appeared.)

A perfect match for the Lee interviews is Terry Pace's talk with the mysterious Harry Alan Towers. Will Towers and Lee ever work together again? Somehow I doubt it—but life, like *Scarlet Street*, is full of pleasant surprises.

Dennis Rehse
Minneapolis, MN

Thanks for your article in *Scarlet Street* #44 on Western DVDs. I was surprised not to find any Spaghetti Westerns listed there, even though you referenced THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY in your preface. This excellent film, and Leone's other "Dollar" films are available on DVD in great, inexpensive editions.

I'm not complaining; any mention of Westerns is welcome, but surely the greats of this genre deserve to be mentioned instead of blah Westerns like THE SONS OF KATIE ELDER, one of the Duke's minor, yet enjoyable potboilers, or the overblown, miscast DUEL IN THE SUN. Perhaps this feature can become a regular in your magazine, and more Euro-Westerns can be featured?

Brian Crist
rtps420@earthlink.net

We'll be covering more Westerns in future issues of *Scarlet Street*, Brian, though we can't agree with you that THE SONS OF KATIE ELDER is either "blah" or "minor."

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As a *Scarlet Street* subscriber, I so enjoyed John F. Black's review of CIRCUS OF HORRORS in Issue #44. In 1989, I spoke to Anton Diffing about doing a biography. Unfortunately, Mr. Diffing died before I could travel to meet him. I am finishing *The Cinema of Fright*, which should be published by the end of the year, and I would like to have any information on Mr. Diffing available, including a copy of Perry Martin's biography on him. Oh, and is Mr. Black aware that his name was the very character name used by Basil Rathbone in THE COMEDY OF TERRORS?

Larry Clifton
Pigeon Forge, TN

John F. Black responds: Larry, Perry Martin's biography of Anton Diffing is a 21-page supplemental article that appears on Anchor Bay's CIRCUS OF HORRORS DVD. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Martin's piece is exclusive to the DVD. The first review I ever wrote for *Scarlet Street* was for the COMEDY OF TERRORS laserdisc, and I greatly enjoyed mentioning that Rathbone portrayed "John F. Black." An appropriate choice for my first SS assignment, don't you think?

I always enjoy reading Ross Care's RECORD RACK columns. Now this is just a little quibble, but THE ROBE, LAURA, HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY, DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, and STAR were not released by Varese Sarabande. Nick Redman was working at Fox for Fox and marketing and distribution was through Arista. When profits were found

to be lacking, either Fox or Arista pulled the plug (possibly both). Redman was able to shop around and finally landed at Varese, where they issued a number of titles, including PLANET OF THE APES, JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS, and STATE FAIR.

Varese apparently wasn't getting as much of a turnaround on sales of the Fox stuff as they would have liked, and no new titles were announced. It just so happened that *Film Score Monthly's* Lukas Kendall had released score albums for THE TAKING OF PELHAM ONE-TWO-THREE in May 1996 and DEADFALL in August 1997 and was receptive to finding more titles to release. At that point, Redman took the Fox vaults to *FSM*. Deals were allegedly struck with the union for lower reuse fees and the *FSM* Golden and Silver Age CD series, released in limited editions, was born, with the first "Silver" release issued in May 1998. That's when things took off for the series. Varese, I'm told, retained rights of first refusal on all titles that Lukas considered. During this period, Varese did the compilation album of Fox scores, and produced the two Bernard Herrmann 2-CD sets.

Toward the end of Summer 2001, a little whisper on the rumor mill indicated that a "parting of the ways" had come about. Very little has been learned about it, but it is said to have been irreparable. Whatever happened, Redman took the Fox catalog back to Varese. Shortly thereafter, the Varese CD Club was reborn.

Before that happened, some major regular releases of Fox material came out of Varese, with the expanded editions for the THE OMEN trilogy.

Interestingly enough, the Varese CD Club releases have featured several Fox titles, including a full-stereo score release for LOVE IS A MANY-SPLENDORED THING, but have also incorporated other "most wanted" titles from other studio vaults. Redman has also started allowing other labels to release Fox material. Many of these were announced late last year, but only SILVER STREAK on Intrada has been released, thus far.

Meanwhile, Lukas has apparently acquired an "in" at Turner/Rhino and Warner's and even more stuff is getting released. We've gotten gorgeous albums of LUST FOR LIFE; JOY IN THE MORNING; and FAREWELL, MY LOVELY/MONKEY SHINES, and others.

Ron Pulliam
Oakland, CA

Hopefully, one of these labels will have the sense to release some Fox musicals, including CALL ME MADAM, DADDY LONG LEGS, and GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES.

I sincerely commend you for the DORIAN GRAY articles in recent issues. I am a Sherlockian, a member of several of the great many worldwide scion societies that enjoy and study the scholarship of Sherlock Holmes. Recently, in one of his monthly Sherlockian newsletters, Peter Blau mentioned the Dorian Gray articles in your magazine. I immediately located

your website, ordered and received back issues #41, #42, and #43. I am excited with delight over them!

In 1945 (age nine), I first saw the MGM movie and, shortly thereafter, the actual painting from the movie. From then on I searched for and learned everything I could about *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In later years I was privileged to meet and converse with the artist Ivan Albright and the actor Hurd Hatfield. By then I had become an artist and painted several pictures of Dorian Gray myself as well as having compiled a large scrap book on the subject.

So you can imagine my great surprise and delight at your recent splendid articles! The only criticism I might give is that the actual paintings and their artists did not receive much recognition. If one could but visit The Art Institute of Chicago and see, face to face, Ivan Albright's painting of Dorian Gray used in the movie, my meaning would be quite obvious. It would certainly be the most shocking and revealing painting of impact one could ever find (in my opinion).

I would like to suggest a follow-up article on the events of twin brothers, Ivan and Malvin Albright rendering their paintings for the movie (Ivan, the "after" and Malvin, the "before" and, the curious secret commissioning of the artist Henrique Madena to paint the young ("before") portrait that was used in place of Malvin's in the movie. The story would be most interesting and pictures of them painting in progress, as well as other such

frightful paintings by Ivan Albright (such as "The Temptation of Saint Anthony" — almost as equally shocking as his Dorian Gray). You could contact Michael Croyden, the biographer of Ivan Albright, who would be happy to give assistance, or I suppose I could write an account, with photos, of this fascinating story. Just a suggestion.

I am overwhelmed at your recent articles and especially happy that many readers of this generation will have been enlightened about *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

John Brousht
Tinley Park IL

Originally our coverage of Oscar Wilde's classic The Picture of Dorian Gray was scheduled to include a piece on the Albright brothers, but there simply wasn't room. Glad you made good use on the Scarlet Street Web (www.scarletstreet.com), though, where you'll find not only back issues, but videos, DVDs, and CDs.

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Yes, kids, it's the Scarlet Street Slightly Mangled Special. We have in our vaults some issues with minor defects: price tags glued on the covers, a folded page, a gypsy curse scrawled on the classifieds . . . nothing too grim, but enough to render them unsuitable for sale at the usual rate.

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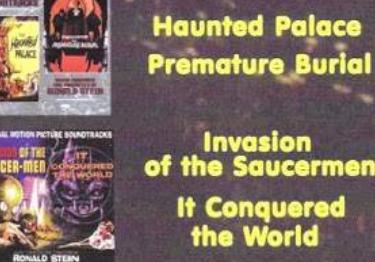
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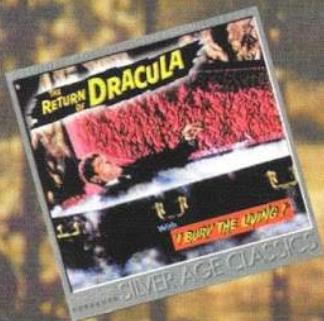
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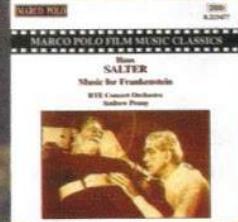
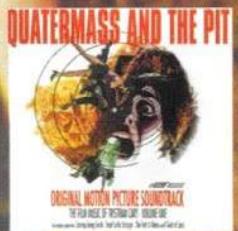


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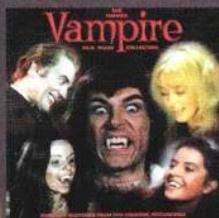
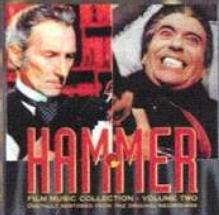
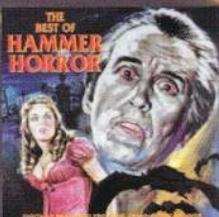


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the NEWS



HOUND

Welcome back to The Hound's den, where *Scarlet Street*'s diligent Dog dishes about tempting attractions arriving soon on large screens, small screens, and in all manner of media

Now Slaying

Hitting the theaters in July . . . Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones don the dark suits once again in *MEN IN BLACK II* (Columbia), doing battle with wily aliens and an out-of-this-world villainess played by Lara Flynn Boyle . . . Dragons run rampant in modern-day England in *REIGN OF FIRE* (Touchstone), starring hot commodities Matthew McConaughey and Christian Bale . . . David Arquette and Kari Wuhrer run screaming from some *EIGHT LEGGED FREAKS* (Warner Bros.), a tentacle-in-cheek horror actioner from New Zealand writer/director Ellory Elkayem . . . HALLOWEEN: RESURRECTION (Dimension) brings back Jamie Lee Curtis for the eighth installment in the fright franchise . . . Mike Myers returns as *AUSTIN POWERS IN GOLDMEMBER* (New Line Cinema), with Michael Caine appearing as Austin's randy dad Nigel.

In August, THE SIXTH SENSE auteur M. Night Shyamalan presents his unique spin on the crop circle phenomenon in *SIGNS* (Touchstone), starring Mel Gibson and Joaquin Phoenix . . . Nightclub owner Eddie Murphy prospers despite a tough location—the Moon—in THE ADVENTURES OF PLUTO NASH (Warner Bros.) . . . Photo developer Robin Williams develops an unhealthy obsession with a customer's family in the Fox Searchlight thriller ONE HOUR PHOTO, which also stars Gary Cole and Eriq La Salle . . . In the Dimension Films thriller THEY, a young grad student becomes traumatized by a pronoun—no, wait!—by her returning childhood fears. BUFFY's buff boyfriend Mark Lucas costars.

Release dates are changeable, so check your local listings for updates.

Future Features

The dangerously talented Mr. Tom Ripley returns this fall in the Fine Line feature *RIPLEY'S GAME*. John Malkovich takes over from Matt Damon (talk about not aging well!) as novelist Patricia Highsmith's cunning protagonist . . . Anthony Hopkins is back as peckish psychopath Hannibal Lecter in *RED DRAGON* (Universal), and Lecter's old nemesis, asylum head Dr. Chilton (Anthony Heald), is on the menu. *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* scripter Ted Tally returns to adapt Thomas Harris' first Lecter novel, previously filmed as *MANHUNTER* by direc-

tor Michael Mann in 1986 . . . Julianna Margulies and Ron Eldard—veterans of TV's *ER*—face another kind of emergency in *GHOST SHIP* (Warner Bros.), portraying salvage crew members fighting for their lives in cold Alaskan waters.

Also scheduled for fall release: THE TRUTH ABOUT CHARLIE (Universal), director Jonathan Demme's remake of CHARADE, starring Mark Wahlberg . . . I SPY (Columbia), with Eddie Murphy and Owen Wilson . . . THE CORE, a Paramount sci-fi actioner about a futuristic journey to the center of the Earth . . . and HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS (Warner Bros.).



The legendary Bela Lugosi flaps his cape again this summer when Columbia/TriStar releases the B-movie classic *RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE* (1944) on DVD.

Due late this year in time for the Holiday hordes: DÉ ANOTHER DAY, the 20th James Bond blockbuster from MGM . . . TREASURE PLANET, Disney's animated Treasure Island on Mars . . . STAR TREK: NEMESIS (Paramount) . . . and THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS (New Line Cinema).

CHARLIE'S ANGELS meets Charlie Chan? Chinese-American actress Lucy Liu, costarring next summer in the CHARLIE'S ANGELS sequel, plans to executive produce and star in a gender-swapped update of Earl Derr Biggers' detective novels entitled CHAN. Liu plays Charlie Chan's granddaughter in the proposed 20th Century Fox film, to be coproduced by Hong Kong action maestro John Woo. With this production Fox would be returning to the Chan clan

seven decades after releasing their classic originals. In the 1930s, Warner Oland played the Honolulu sleuth in 16 Fox features, with Sidney Toler stepping in for 11 more upon Oland's death. Toler, and then Roland Winters, starred in 17 additional Chan features for Monogram in the 1940s.

Déjà Views

Variety reports that Nicolas Cage has been signed to star in an updated, Americanized remake of THE WICKER MAN for Universal. It's to be directed by Neil LaBute, writer/director of IN THE COMPANY OF MEN (1997) and this spring's Gwyneth Paltrow romantic drama POSSESSION. *Variety* also reports on a planned Paramount remake of THE REINCARNATION OF PETER PROUD, to be directed by David Fincher (PANIC ROOM, ALIEN 3).

DreamWorks is planning a series of Matt Helm features based on the Donald Hamilton spy novels. Columbia turned them into jokey vehicles for Dean Martin in the Swingin' Sixties, but DreamWorks plans more hard, James Bondian action for their flicks. The first Helm is to be helmed by Australian writer/director Robert Luketic of 2001's LEGALLY BLONDE.

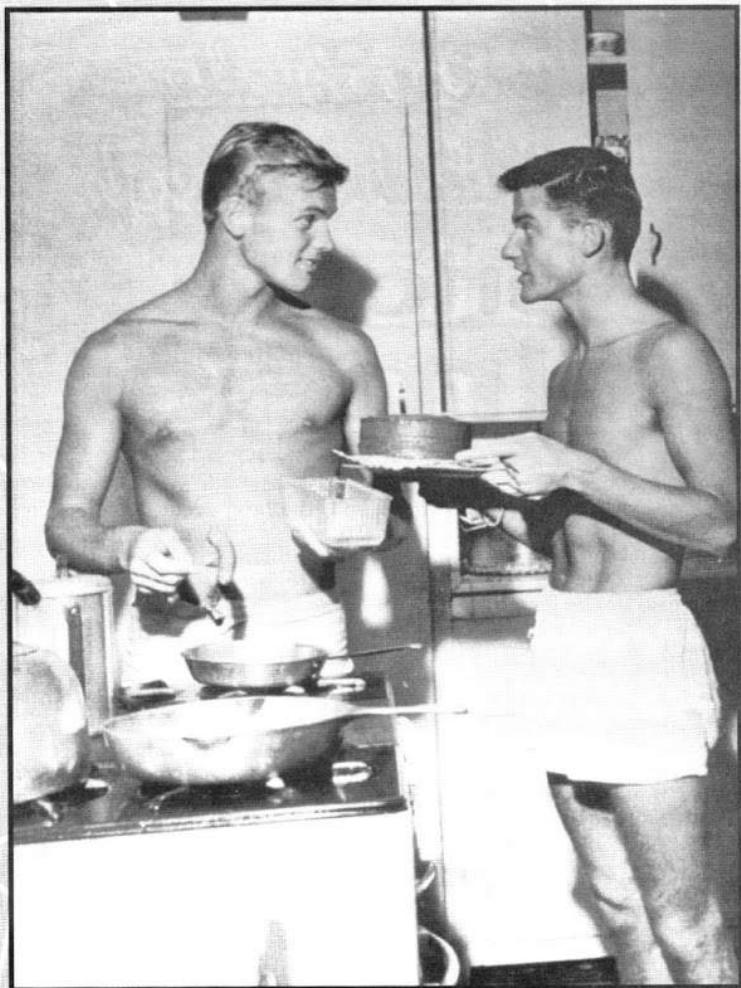
In marvelous Marvel movie news: Columbia has already penciled in a May 7, 2004 release date for SPIDER-MAN 2. Fox is eyeing a May 2003 bow for its X-MEN sequel, entitled X2. DAREDEVIL (Fox) starring Ben Affleck opens next February, and THE HULK (Universal), from director Ang Lee, muscles into theaters in June 2003.

Sequelmania continues in 2003: THE MATRIX RELOADED (Warner Bros.) is scheduled for May . . . a major cat-fight is brewing between Lara Croft and the Angels, as TOMB RAIDER 2 (Paramount) fights for cineplex space in May with CHARLIE'S ANGELS 2: HALO (Columbia) . . . Arnie's back in TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES (Warner Bros.), due to open in July . . . The final film in THE LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy, RETURN OF THE KING (New Line), is scheduled to debut in December 2003.

TV Terrors

This fall the UPN network reaches into THE TWILIGHT ZONE to bring back yet another incarnation of the anthology series masterminded by Rod Serling. Forest Whitaker (PANIC ROOM) hosts and narrates this new hour-long version, slated to follow ENTERPRISE on Wednesday

Continued on page 20



TAB: Say, Roddy, have you seen the swell Discussion Boards over on the Scarlet Website? You can sign on and talk about classic Universal Horrors, Hammer Films, Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan, Alfred Hitchcock, Tarzan of the Apes, The Thin Man, Jack the Ripper, and just about anything else that comes to mind! Why, heck, you can even talk about sexual subtexts in our old pictures . . .

RODDY: Subtexts? What subtexts?

Hot Dog! You asked for 'em, you got 'em—and they really take the cake! Nothing holds a candle to the brand new Discussion Boards at . . .

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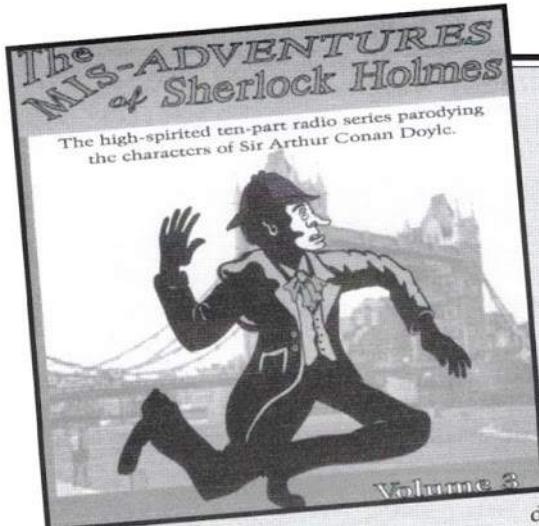
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. . . so come on in, as the spider said to the fly. Don't delay! Sign on today at:

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Website designed by John E. Payne





Amazing, isn't it, how such an enthusiastic cult following has developed over this blithering idiot called Sherlock Holmes? At least, that's the wacky premise of the charming and very funny radio series THE MISADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

Imagine if you will that The Fireside Theatre had decided to continue spoofing Holmes after their classic THE GIANT RAT OF SUMATRA (a story also parodied in Misadventures) and you can begin to get an idea of this wonderfully whimsical, often dadaesque series. It seems Dr. John H. Watson once spilled a cup of Earl Gray over his diary, and has had to trust to memory to relate the adventures of his good friend and companion, Sherlock Holmes. Consequently, a number of story details have been heightened for

dramatic purposes. Thus, "The Five Orange Pips" was really what Holmes spit out in Orange, *A Study In Scarlet* was actually *A Study In Lavender*, and "The Blue Carbuncle" merely a blue car buckle. At least, the mystery of whether Watson was shot in the arm or the leg is at last cleared up. (It was both; he was shot while practicing yoga.)

These and other tales are revealed in 10 fun-filled episodes. Arthur Conan Doyle appears, to convince Watson that this boob called Holmes might be an interesting literary character for literature. Sherlock proves that he is, but not without major discomfort (like being locked in an insane asylum for 20 years) to Watson. Along the way, we encounter Jack The Ripper, Irene Adler, Professor Moriarty, Murray the Killer Bee, Sinbad the Sumatran Rodent of Great Size, Sigmund Freud, and William Gillette (who sounds like Sgt. Bilko).

Producer/writer/director Joe Bevilacqua got the idea for the series from his friend, the late, great voice artist Daws (Huckleberry Hound) Butler. The acting is top notch, with Vernon Morris as the befuddled Holmes, Henry J. Quinn as an exasperated Watson, the late Jan Meredith as a very feisty Mrs. Hudson, Ed Hyland as Moriarty; Gwendolyn Lewis and Terri Price (in different episodes) as Irene Adler, and Bevilacqua himself as variety of characters, including Conan Doyle, The Ripper, and Gillette. Other players bringing this skewed world to life include Scotty MacMillo, Gary Beery, Ed Easton, William Melillo, B. H. Barry, and Joseph Cattalano.

THE MISADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (five CDs or cassettes at \$16 each) is available through www.comedyorama.com.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 18

nights. Feature producer/writer Pen Densham, executive producer of Showtime's THE OUTER LIMITS, performs similar duties for the new series. This is actually TV's fourth trip into the ZONE—CBS aired Serling's original from 1959 to 1964, and then presented its admirable revival series in 1985-1987. A rather less-admirable half-hour syndicated series by Canadian producers Atlantis Films followed in 1988.

HAUNTED, another new fall entry from UPN, stars Matthew Fox (PARTY OF FIVE) as a private eye who, following a near-death experience, gets otherworldly help solving his cases from friendly and not-so-friendly ghosts (none named Casper). It's on UPN's Tuesday night schedule right after BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER.

BUFFY creator Joss Whedon's new Fox series FIREFLY is described as a sort of "western in space." The show stars Canadian actor Nathan Fillion (DRACULA 2000) as captain of a transport ship at the edge of the deep-space frontier. (As referenced by the show's title, the ship's back end lights up—presumably when you hit the brakes.) Following FIREFLY on Friday nights is another new Fox show, JOHN DOE, about an amnesiac who finds that he has total recall of all

Earthly knowledge—except for convenient things like his own name and address. Starring in the title role is Australian actor Dominic Purcell, who's been featured in a role on the syndicated BEASTMASTER series.

DARK ANGEL, the James Cameron-produced sci-fi superchick series, has been cancelled by Fox after its sophomore year. Ditto for ROSWELL, the alien-teen show which began on the WB network, switched to UPN, and has now been switched off. (Sci-Fi Channel will start reruns in the fall.)

More TV News

Whoops, apocalypse—it's the end of all life on Earth, and an orbiting space shuttle crew has a 200-mile-high ring-side seat for the catastrophe. That's the premise of ODYSSEY 5, Showtime's new sci-fi series starring Peter Weller, debuting June 21. Weller and his fellow astronauts aren't lost in space for long. They acquire alien technology that allows them to return to Earth five years in the past, armed with knowledge that may save humankind from destruction—or at least give them a chance to dump their Enron stock. The series begins with a feature-length pilot episode directed by STAR TREK's David Carson, followed by 18 hour-long shows scheduled for Fridays at 10PM Eastern and Pacific Time.

Also in the works for Showtime is an original movie—and potential series—entitled DEAD GIRL, from producer/writer Bryan Fuller, formerly of DEEP SPACE NINE and VOYAGER. The title character is a recently deceased young lady who becomes a sort of grim-reaperette, gathering the souls of fellow unfortunates and, in the process, learning valuable lessons about life—uh-oh, too late for her. More on this project as it develops.

We're counting the centons till Sci-Fi Channel presents its update of BATTLE-STAR GALACTICA. The 1978 ABC space opera gets updated as a four-hour mini-series next season, produced by David Eick (AMERICAN GOTHIC, SPY GAME) and written by Ronald D. Moore (STAR TREK, ROSWELL). Other miniseries on Sci-Fi's 2002-03 schedule include an adaptation of the popular computer game MYST, THE CHRONICLES OF AMBER based on Roger Zelazny's 1970-78 fantasy series, and a production of Joe Haldeman's 1975 Hugo and Nebula Award-winning novel *The Forever War*. Also on Sci-Fi's slate is ON THE SEVENTH DAY, an original seven-hour miniseries about a future world so overpopulated that people must stay sealed in a cryogenic chamber for six days out of the week. Unfortunately, the one remaining day is spent cleaning out the chamber.

The Home Video Vault

Newly available on DVD: Ray Harryhausen's 20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH (Columbia/TriStar, \$24.95); a new collector's edition of NORTH BY NORTHWEST from deluxe distributors Creative Design (\$79.98); a special edition of David Lynch's BLUE VELVET (MGM/UA, \$24.98) featuring a documentary and deleted scenes; the Richard Gere paranormal thriller THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES (Columbia/TriStar, \$27.96); last year's remake of ROLLERBALL (MGM/UA, \$26.98); and a four-disc boxed set from A&E of Supermarionation series CAPTAIN SCARLET (\$59.95).

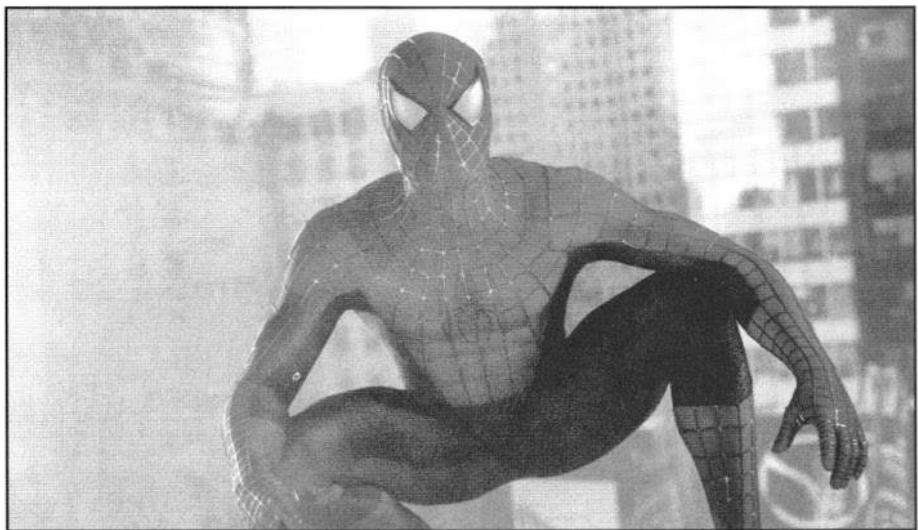
Season Three of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION (Paramount, \$134.99) is available on DVD in July, as are the first 13 episodes of the 1970 UK sci-fi series UFO (A&E, \$79.95). Also available in July: a special edition of THE TIME MACHINE remake from earlier this year (Universal, \$26.99), the revisionist Robin Hood tale ROBIN AND MARIAN (Columbia/TriStar, \$24.95), and the video game-based horror flick RESIDENT EVIL (Columbia/TriStar, \$27.96). A quartet of sixties spy spoofs is due from Fox: FATHOM, MODESTY BLAISE, OUR MAN FLINT, and IN LIKE FLINT (\$14.98 each). And A&E presents all 32 original episodes of THUNDERBIRDS in a boxed set for \$179.95.

Columbia/TriStar has finally realized what treasures it has and begun sharing them. August brings DVD releases of RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE, THE CURSE OF THE DEMON, REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN, and THE BROTHERHOOD OF SATAN, priced at \$24.95 each.

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING is due on home video in August from Warner Bros. (DVD \$29.95), and a special DVD edition is due to follow in November, featuring 30 minutes of additional footage.

The extended Director's Edition of STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN (Paramount, \$29.99) is available in August in a two-disc set including interviews, featurettes, and an audio commentary from director Nicholas Meyer. Meyer also lends his commentary to a special edition of TIME AFTER TIME (Warner, \$19.98), joined by stars Malcolm McDowell and David Warner. Also new on DVD from Warner: THEM!, WOLFEN, CLASH OF THE TITANS, THE SWARM, and EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC (\$19.98 each).

Available in August from MPI Home Video on DVD: Dan Curtis televisions of THE TURN OF THE SCREW, starring Lynn Redgrave (1974); THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, with Shane Briant and Nigel Davenport (1973); THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1968) and DRACULA (1973), both starring Jack Palance. They're available separately, or as a boxed set. Also in Au-



Millions of moviegoers who have proven themselves stuck on SPIDER-MAN will be happy to know that the film will be available on DVD in October. The inevitable SPIDER-MAN 2 is tentatively set to debut on May 7, 2004. Doctor Octopus is the likely villain.

gust from MGM: the DVD double bills WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?/WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO? (\$14.95), THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH/THE PREMATURE BURIAL (\$14.95), THE OBLONG BOX/SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN (\$14.95), TEEN WOLF/TEEN WOLF TOO (\$14.95), and DERANGED/MOTEL HELL (\$14.95), EDGE OF SANITY (\$14.95); THE FOG (\$19.98), THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT Special Edition (\$14.95).

DR. SYN, ALIAS THE SCARECROW—the feature version of Disney's baby boomer TV favorite THE SCARECROW OF ROMNEY MARSH—is headed for DVD late this year as part of the second series of Walt Disney Treasures limited edition discs. Also new to the series are TRUE LIFE ADVENTURES, THE COMPLETE GOOFY, and MICKEY MOUSE IN BLACK AND WHITE.

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS is a shot-on-digital-video vampire drama from New York-based producer Howard Nash. Nash is seeking theatrical and home video distribution for the film, about a vampire hunter-turned-bloodsucker who seeks to destroy the powerful vamp who put the bite on his bride. For more details, visit www.sleeplessnights-themovie.com.

In October, watch for DVD releases of THE SCORPION KING (Universal), HELLRAISER: HELLSEEKER (Dimension), SCOOBY DOO (Warner), and the E.T. 20th Anniversary Edition (Universal). SPIDER-MAN, MEN IN BLACK II, and STAR WARS EPISODE 2 look promising for a November release, and the BACK TO THE FUTURE trilogy (Universal) is tentatively scheduled for December.

Gone, but never to be forgotten: movie mogul Lew Wasserman; animation icon

Chuck Jones; Disney writer/storyboarder Bill Peet; comic artists Dave Berg, John Buscema, and Kurt Schaffenberger; author and film historian Alan G. Barbour; television pioneers Milton Berle and Sylvester "Pat" Weaver; film archivist and publisher Harry Nadler; movie critic Howard Thompson; television journalist Baxter Ward; singers Waylon Jennings, Lisa Lopes, and Dave Van Ronk; musician and composer Oskar Sala; stage designer Josef Svoboda; sound editor Josef von Stroheim; makeup artists Kevyn Aucoin and Ted Coodley; novelists Gwen Davenport and Astrid Lindgren; journalist/screenwriters Stephen Longstreet and Annalee Whitmore; radio and television writer Barry Took; producers Don Haig, Louis M. "Deke" Heyward, Roy Huggins, Ted Tannebaum, Michael Todd Jr., and Herman Cohen; screenwriters Leonard Gershe, Al Lewis, and Henry Slesar; directors Paul Landres, George Sidney, William Witney, and Billy Wilder; and actors John Agar, Sheldon Allman, Joe Cobb, Claire Davenport, Ivan Desny, Signe Hasso, Heinz Drache, María Félix, Eric Flynn, Barry Foster, Carrie Hamilton, Peggy Hewitt, Stratford Johns, Darwood Kaye, Jack Kruschen, Queenie Leonard, Linda Lovelace (Linda Borenman), Lucille Lund, Alan Manson, Irish McCalla, Nobu McCarthy, Spike Milligan, Dudley Moore, George Nader, Bill Radovich, Yves Robert, Shirley Russell, Evelyn Scott, Kevin Smith, Mel Stewart, Guy Stockwell, John Thaw, Lawrence Tierney, Barbara Townsend, Stanley Unwin, Robert Urich, Barbara Valentin, Irene Worth, and Ray Stricklyn.



Send your questions, comments, and compliments to TheNewsHound@scarletstreet.com.

Next in SS: The Creature From the Black Lagoon

SCREEN...



and Screen AGAIN!



Scarlet Street's DVD Reviews

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES
MGM Home Entertainment

\$14.95

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES
BBC Learning

\$19.99

The release of two DVDs have afforded Peter Cushing fans the unique opportunity to compare the actor's portrayal of Sherlock Holmes in the 1959 Hammer Films production of *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* with his later performance as Holmes in the same story, in a two-part BBC dramatization. The Hammer version has been readily available for years, on TV, video, and laserdisc, but the BBC show, one of 15 Holmes stories broadcast on British television in 1968, is a genuine rarity. Of the BBC episodes, the official word is that

only *THE HOUND*, *A STUDY IN SCARLET*, *THE BOSCOMBE VALLEY MYSTERY*, *THE SIGN OF FOUR*, and *THE BLUE CARBUNCLE* are still in existence, and even these haven't been seen in anything other than shoddy bootleg copies for decades.

Hammer's *HOUND* is one of the studio's most successful films, though it's always been overshadowed by the productions surrounding it—*THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957), *HORROR OF DRACULA* (1958), *THE MUMMY* (1959), *THE BRIDES OF DRACULA* (1960), and *THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF* (1961). Directed by Terence Fisher and eerily scored by James Bernard, the film fairly drips Gothic atmosphere. Peter Bryan's script plays fast and loose with several Arthur Conan Doyle charac-

ters (and deletes some altogether) and emphasizes the story's horror elements, but it all works. Christopher Lee is a dashing (if disconcertingly towering) Sir Henry Baskerville, and Andre Morell one of the very best of the screen's Dr. Watsons. Peter Cushing is a driven, hyperactive Sherlock.

The DVD presentation is crisp and colorful, though not quite on a par with the laserdisc release, which was exceptional. The disc includes the theatrical trailer (surprisingly, in black-and-white), a featurette with Christopher Lee, and a special feature with Lee reading excerpts from the original novel. The featurette is completely charming, especially when Lee reminisces about ragging Cushing for his dexterity with props and his Famous Finger Pointing. There's nothing really new concerning the filming of *THE HOUND*—it's all in the interview Lee did for *Scarlet Street* in 1992—but Lee's genuine affection for his late friend and costar shines through.

What a splendid production is the BBC *HOUND*, and what wonderful performances by all concerned. (Hell, even the *Hound* works in this one!) Nigel Stock may look rather like a stock Nigel Bruceian Watson, but he doesn't play the good doctor as a dunce. Gary Raymond (the treacherous Acastus of 1963's *JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS*) is an excellent Sir Henry Baskerville. Peter Cushing—perhaps hemmed in by the confining television cameras—is a calmer, though no less brilliant Sherlock.

The color presentation is remarkably sharp, considering the quality of most videotaped TV shows of the period. (As was then the custom, the interiors are taped, the exteriors filmed.) If *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* is any indication, the BBC should get cracking on DVD releases of the remaining programs, and put their best TV detectives on the trail of the missing stories. Surely someone has them, somewhere!

—Richard Valley

13 GHOSTS
STRAIT-JACKET
Columbia Tristar

\$19.95 each

William Castle was a master showman who didn't have the budget to compete with major Hollywood films. Instead, he used gimmicks to draw people to his movies. His first such film, *MACABRE* (1958), offered patrons a \$1,000 insurance policy against dying from fright while watching the film. It was such a success that he used a different gimmick for each of his next few films.

For *13 GHOSTS* (1960), Castle came up with Illusion-O, a tinting process for the ghost scenes. Patrons were given a Ghost Viewer—a piece of cardboard with two strips of colored celluloid. To see the ghosts viewers looked through the red strip, to remove them the blue strip. Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment is to be commended for presenting the film on DVD complete with Illusion-O.





Cyrus Zorba (Donald Woods) is in dire financial shape; having his furniture repossessed is only one of his worries. Luck is seemingly on his side, though, when he inherits his uncle Plato's mansion. It comes with furniture and a creepy housekeeper who just may be a witch (played by the Wicked Witch of the West herself, Margaret Hamilton). Cyrus moves in with his wife, Hilda (Rosemary De Camp), and their two children, Buck and Medea (Charles Herbert and Jo Morrow). The first night in their new home, Buck finds a Ouija board, which tells them that the house also includes among its furnishings 13 ghosts—and that someone else is destined to make it 14.

This is not Castle's best gimmick film, but it contains several effective scenes, with the Ouija board sequence being the highlight. *Illusion-O* is quite fun and adds to the spookhouse atmosphere. *13 GHOSTS* is presented on a dual-sided DVD in anamorphic widescreen, with the *Illusion-O* and black-and-white versions on opposite sides. (The disc is mislabeled, by the way, so you get *Illusion-O* on the side marked black-and-white.) The print is flawless, with good contrasts and solid sound. The disc also contains a featurette that briefly touches on Castle's other gimmick films, English and Spanish audio, subtitles in seven languages, three trailers, and one ghost viewer with an order form for additional viewers.

As William Castle's films made more money there was less need of gimmicks to attract publicity. For *STRAIT-JACKET* (1964), he had enough budget to include a self-contained gimmick of sorts—Joan Crawford as an axe murderer. A screenplay by "psychotic specialist" Robert Bloch didn't hurt either.

Lucy Harbin (Crawford) has spent the last 20 years in an asylum for the axe murders of her husband (Lee Majors!) and his girlfriend (Lyn Lundgren). Finally released into the custody of brother Bill Cutler (Leif Erickson) and his wife Emily (Rochelle Hudson) and reunited with daughter Carol (Diane Baker), Lucy has a brief period of normality before she begins hearing gory nursery rhymes and seeing disembodied heads. Carol brings her intended, Michael Fields (John An-

THONY HAYES), to meet Mom, but Lucy promptly puts the moves on him. When Lucy's doctor (Mitchell Cox) unexpectedly drops by, he decides that his patient must return to the institution. Before he can inform her, though, the axe falls and his remains are hidden. The same fate soon befalls a sleazy farm hand (George Kennedy). Is Lucy to blame or is someone trying to push her over the edge?

STRAIT-JACKET is considered camp, now, but according to the DVD's featurette it was never intended as such. Still, since both Castle and Bloch had a macabre sense of humor, they must have intended *STRAIT-JACKET* as, at the very least, high melodrama. (Pay special attention to the Columbia logo at the film's end for confirmation.) It's not one of Bloch's strongest screenplays—the plotting is nondescript, the denouement none too surprising, and the characters (with the exception of Lucy) blandly drawn. Joan Crawford's performance is where the movie strikes gold. Her scenes of normality are played with quiet dignity and a touch of melancholy, as befits a character who's paid her dues and wants only to put the past behind her. Once she slips into dementia, though, watch out!

STRAIT-JACKET is another splendid Castle release, with a near-perfect print in widescreen and good, solid sound. In addition to the featurette, the extras include makeup and costume tests, a graphic (even for today) effects test, and trailers for three Castle films.

—Ron Morgan

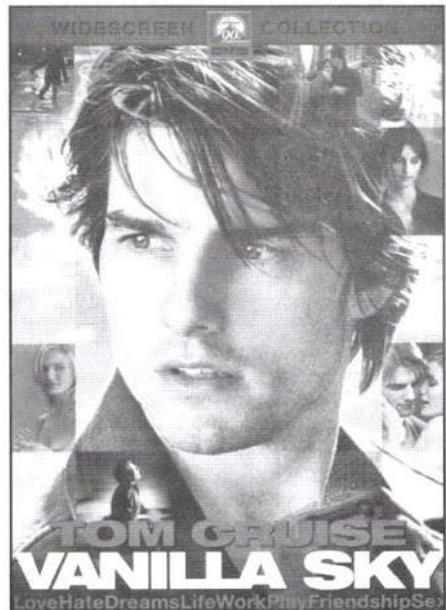
VANILLA SKY Paramount Home Video \$29.99

"If you think this is about vanity, you're wrong," claims a disfigured Tom Cruise to a team of plastic surgeons in one of the more ironic moments in Cameron Crowe's *VANILLA SKY* (2001). Oh, yeah? This, I suppose, is why the actor's face looms 40 inches high from the film's poster. On the face of things, *VANILLA SKY* tells us not only that its star isn't vain, but arbitrarily drags in a statement concerning his heterosexuality. (So much for the niggling rumors on that score!)

These are just a few of the problems that cannot be overcome in this frustratingly fascinating film. *VANILLA SKY* isn't a great picture, but it's never less than mesmerizing in its essential strangeness and the double-edged sword of a subtext that exists only because it stars and is coproduced by Cruise. As filmmaking, it's remarkably assured. In taking Alejandro Amenabar's 1997 Spanish original *OPEN YOUR EYES* (which starred Penelope Cruz in the same role she assays here), Crowe has developed a complex narrative in the manner of a cinematic jigsaw puzzle that spends over two hours play-

ing mind games with the viewer, only to lead to a conclusion where everything actually makes sense. The problem with this is that it's a lot of work to get a conclusion that is more than apt to leave you asking, "And the point to all this is?" It's clever. It's strangely haunting. But if it has any deep significance beyond being a flashy piece of writing and filmmaking, that significance is lost.

An almost impossibly vain and shallow publishing magnate, David Aames (Cruise), dumps his occasional girlfriend, Julie Gianni (Cameron Diaz), when he meets his apparent true love, Sofia Serrano (Penelope Cruz), at his birthday party. The rejected Julie immediately goes Glenn Close ("When you sleep with someone, your body makes a promise whether you do or not") and tries to kill both him and herself in a car wreck. She apparently succeeds in her suicide bid, but only leaves her errant lover mangled and disfigured. I say "apparently," because this is where the film starts interweaving truth and dreams on such a level that even when you think you know where you are, it pulls the reality rug from beneath your feet. It's a grand game played by a filmmaker who knows how to use both image and sound.



If it seems ultimately rather hollow, it nevertheless sticks with you, suggesting that there's something more here than is immediately apparent. But that, too, may be a part of the game, and something only the individual viewer can decide.

In many ways, *VANILLA SKY* would be a better film with almost anyone but Cruise in the lead. This isn't so much because he lacks the skill to bring off the role, but because his presence in the movie is frankly distracting. In a sense, it's the ultimate Tom Cruise vehicle, because it's so completely immersed in narcissism and self-importance. Since it is Cruise, this goes way beyond the boundaries of the film, making it seem like the production of a man who wants it

both ways—he wants us to realize how pretty he is, all the while trying to convince us that this is of no consequence. Sure, he spends much of the movie disfigured or behind a creepy mask, but he oh-so-carefully makes sure that he gets to play his final scene as himself in all his glory. (One can't forget that he refused to play the title character in 1990's *EDWARD SCISSORHANDS* unless the film was rewritten so that Edward was transformed into something more traditionally attractive by the end of the movie.) Still, one must admire both Cruise and Crowe for putting out a film so deliberately complex and convoluted that it's apt to alienate a lot of its potential audience, who are likely to find it just too strange.

The widescreen DVD presentation includes audio commentary by Cameron Crowe and composer Nancy Wilson (who wrote the film's music), a "conversation with Tom Cruise" (presumably about the film and not his "I'm not gay!" lawsuits), an interview with Paul McCartney (who performs the title tune), trailers, a photo gallery, and the featurettes *PRELUDER TO A DREAM* and *HITTING IT HARD*.

—Ken Hanke

GIANT OF METROPOLIS

Retromedia Entertainment

\$14.95

The year 20,000 B.C. finds the Atlantean city of Metropolis, ruled by King Yotar (Roldano Lupi), teetering on the brink of destruction. Yotar's manipulation of elemental energy, combined with human sacrifices and cutting-edge brain transplant surgery, has catapulted the universe into disharmony. The noble strongman, Obro (Gordon Mitchell), journeys to the city with a message of peace.

GIANT OF METROPOLIS (1961/64) chronicles the despotic Yotar's sadistic experimentation to measure Obro's capacity for endurance. Our "giant" is forced to defend himself against a battery of challenges, including a five-man army

of flesh-eating pygmies, who attempt to bite him into submission. Love bites are the least of Obro's problems, though, as very soon he's subjected to scalding heat lamps and freezing rays. "Push harder! Push harder!!" Yotar exalts as the hero's limits are further tested. Obro's idealism is shaken, leading him to escape and launch retaliatory attacks against the king's soldiers. The Gods demonstrate displeasure with Yotar's excesses by sinking Metropolis with a deluge, sparing only Obro, Princess Mecede (Bella Cortez), and the young Prince Elmos (Marietto).

GIANT OF METROPOLIS offers plenty of visual enticements. The city itself is depicted by a blend of futuristic architecture and artifacts of antiquity. The sets reflect a minimalist design, and the darkly-lit interiors suggest a civilization that has arrogantly turned its back to the sun. The claustrophobic ambience recalls *THE 5,000 FINGERS OF DR. T.* (1953), while anticipating Mario Bava's *PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES* (1965). Retromedia's DVD provides a transfer superior to previous television and VHS editions. The Eastmancolor has faded somewhat, and there are frequent print scratches, but the disc's presentation remains satisfactory. The image is matted at 1:66-1 as well as windowboxed, revealing as many peripheral details as possible. The soundtrack's principal musical theme, an ominous burst of piano and horns, underscores the DVD's menu, becoming as imprinted on one's brain as the singular flamenco guitar/tack piano fanfare that no patron of *MESA OF LOST WOMEN* (1953) or *JAIL BAIT* (1954) could forget.

Retromedia includes some entertaining supplements. A one-minute excerpt from an Italian-language print contains line readings noticeably more forceful than those of the English dubbing cast. There are two galleries, one a collection of black-and-white stills, the other an assemblage of muscleman trailer previews (including one that titles the main feature as *GIANT OF THE METROPOLIS*).

Gordon Mitchell himself is appropriately spotlighted in a six-minute video interview, during which he breezily cites some favorite reminiscences: costarring with Ronald Reagan; appearing in some of Mae West's stage extravaganzas; forging a cinematic peplum/Western career in Italy; and his recent success as an Expressionist painter. There's even a clip of a faux trailer, *GOLIATH AND THE CHEERLEADERS* (from Fred Olen Ray's 1995 spoof *BIKINI DRIVE-IN*), in which the still-handsome actor battles two pom-pom wielding babes.

—John F. Black

THE WATCHER

Universal Home Video

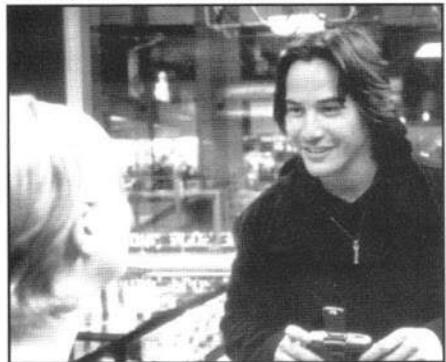
\$26.98

James Spader plays burnt-out FBI agent Joel Campbell, who is recovering from an incident in his past involving a serial killer in California. Campbell relocates to

Chicago, and is undergoing therapy when his nemesis (Keanu Reeves) pops up and begins to torment Campbell with a new string of murders.

THE WATCHER (2000) has the proper ingredients for a decent thriller, but it never quite clicks. It's at its best exploring the lives of the victims, who for once have some character and background. However, it tries too hard to be slick, and its rock-score soundtrack destroy the mood. The few scenes that use Marco Beltrami's score are much more effective.

The film's most pleasant surprise is Reeves. Playing psychos, rednecks (see his superb performance in another 2000



film, *THE GIFT*, directed by Sam Raimi), and killers brings a heretofore unseen talent out in Reeves. As David Allen Griffin, he delights in his cat and mouse game of sending Campbell photos of his next victims, who will die if the police don't track them down in time.

The sound and picture quality are excellent, but the extras are minimal, consisting of cast bios repeated on the DVD ROM extras, which also features screen savers and a link to the Universal website.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER

Image Entertainment

\$24.99

Not to be confused with the even less competent *JESSE JAMES MEETS FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER* (1966), this moving story of monsters and the teens who become them is one of four low-budget triumphs Richard Cunha wrought upon the world in 1958 and 1959. (The others are *SHE DEMONS*, *GIANT FROM THE UNKNOWN*, and *MISSILE TO THE MOON*.) Stylistically lost in the zone between Roger Corman's hip self-awareness and Ed Wood's "outsider" poetry, Cunha's films don't always spring to mind when thinking "great badness," but that may be about to change. His infamous quaternity have been recently released to DVD as part of the Wade Williams Collection, and *FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER* (1958)—loved by those who saw it as UHF-addicted children, loathed by nearly everyone else—seems especially ready for its closeup.

The story begins with nightie-clad teen Trudy (Sandra Knight) running through her small town USA neighborhood in full monsterface, scaring the locals. It seems





Trudy is prone to these transformations thanks to the genetic tampering of her scientist father's sleazy lab assistant, Dr. Frank (Donald Murphy). Not only is this evil suburban genius up to unethical experiments, but he's also a sex fiend with an eye for both Trudy and her promiscuous pal, Suzie Lawler (Sally Todd). Awed by Dr. Frank's predatory energy, Suzie accompanies him for a drive. When she rejects his clumsy advances, he's compelled to run her over with his car, severing her head—which he then uses as the "topping" for his Greatest Creation, a Frankenstein monster female. Alas, the monster retains none of Suzie's charms, resembling instead an overweight male jogger afflicted with acromegaly and too much lipstick. Meanwhile, upstairs in suburbia, no one gives a second thought to Trudy's mounting worries, deciding instead to cheer her up with an extended backyard barbecue "graced" with the musical stylings of Page Cavanaugh and his Trio. Other highlights include a fiery climax, unbelievable dialogue, surprising gore (a half-dismembered leg, a melting face), and decent acting turns by Knight and Todd (aside from a truly pathetic fainting scene). In short, it's a classic of the "meddling kids" genre that straddles the line between Hammer and Wood, with a little Doo (Scooby as well as Wop) thrown in for good measure.

The DVD transfer is so sharp it could pierce a spinal cord. Could this have ever looked as good, even on the big screen? The spectrum of deep blacks, moody grays, and crisp whites is astounding, and nighttime sequences seem sharper and clearer than humanly possible. Viewers used to cheap VHS editions of this title will think they're seeing a different movie, and the lucky rest of us who've ignored Cunha's work until now will be totally amazed—on more than one level. A trailer, amusing photo gallery, and liner notes round out the sublime silk-pursing of this resewn sow's ear. With his other three titles also available on superb Image

DVDs, now is the time to become an instant fan of the big Cunha.

—Erich Kuersten

HOMICIDAL

Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment

\$24.95

Warning: If you've never seen HOMICIDAL, and intend to see HOMICIDAL, don't read this review of HOMICIDAL!

William Castle's HOMICIDAL (1961) is a horror exercise that borrows the transvestite killer theme from Alfred Hitchcock's PSYCHO (1960). However, Castle bends the mechanics of that device to fit his peculiar universe of gimmickry. Warren Webster (Joan Marshall, aka Jean Arless, in male drag) was born a girl, but conspiratorially raised as a boy by her mother and a nurse, Helga Swenson (Eugenie Leontovich). Awaiting a huge inheritance for his 21st birthday, Warren plans to murder the three people who might stand in his way. He draws upon his innate femininity to masquerade as Emily (Marshall again), a schizophrenic caregiver who wields a surgical knife with decidedly unladylike precision. The deception is finally unraveled by Miriam Webster (Patricia Breslin), Warren's older half-sister.

Castle and screenwriter Robb White employ such PSYCHO staples as the cross-dressing knife killer, a staircase murder, a threatening traffic policeman, and an expository summation of the case following the perpetrator's unmasking, but HOMICIDAL is most noted for its Fright Break, a 60-second theatrical pause during which Castle dares viewers to retreat to the safety of the Coward's Corner. His most effective gimmick, however, remains the casting of Joan Marshall in the dual role, a strategy that fooled most sixties and seventies audiences. Most first-timers opined that the "man" enacting Warren wasn't very forceful in the role. Contemporary audiences more acclimated to gender-bending may readily see through it, but Marshall's performance arguably renders the production more entertaining on subsequent viewings. As Warren, the actress often keeps her hands in her jacket pockets while arching her shoulders, striking an exaggeratedly masculine pose. In retrospect,



Marshall doesn't really make a believable man (Warren's dialogue is dubbed by a slightly sissified male voice), but that incongruity gives the film its memorably off-kilter mood.

Despite keeping the dual identity a secret until the denouement, Castle furnishes visual clues that link the two personas. Our first viewing of Warren is in an 8X10 portrait; the glass' reflection superimposes Emily's face over Warren's as she gazes at it. Later, when Miriam comes to visit, Emily protectively clutches a childhood doll to her chest in the same manner in which young Warren had taken the doll away from Miriam when they were children.

Columbia's DVD offers superior black-and-white contrasts and resolution in comparison to previous TV prints. The blemish-free image is presented full-frame, but the compositions appear well-centered, with little picture information missing from the sides. A nearly eight-minute featurette celebrates the director's brand of ballyhoo, and includes footage of the Coward's Corner and photos that depict Marshall's feminine curls being shorn to conventional masculine length. Trailers for Castle's STRAIT-JACKET (1964) and MR. SARDONICUS (1961) are included, but not for HOMICIDAL.

—John F. Black

THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE

Anchor Bay Entertainment

\$24.99

Val Guest's stunning THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE (1961) may be the finest genre entry in a career that includes THE QUATERMASS XPERIMENT (1955), QUATERMASS 2 (1957), and THE ABOM-



INABLE SNOWMAN (1957). In the tradition of Ray Bradbury and Rod Serling, producer/director/writer Guest and co-writer Wolf Mankowitz transform a conventional science fiction premise into an exploration of the human condition.

An ambitious independent production, THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE skirts convention at every turn, bypassing the antinuclear sermonizing and Biblical affectations common to doomsday tales. Rather than a Quatermass-style science hero, the protagonist, Peter Stanning (Edward Judd), is a jaded, alcoholic Fleet Street journalist, already en route to his own personal apocalypse when the story begins. The dialogue is heavy on exposition, but the newsroom cast, including Leo McKern (TV's RUMPOLE OF THE BAILEY) and Robin Hawdon (later used by Guest as the caveman hero in 1970's WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH) never sounds a false note.

The fetching Disney starlet Janet Munro (1959's DARBY O'GILL AND THE

LITTLE PEOPLE) is cast as Jeannie, a government employee who ignites Stenning's liquor-sodden passions. In a world of official secrets and impending cataclysm, Stenning's contempt for authority proves more realistic than Jeannie's confidence that "the people at the top are cleverer than we are."

The film is layered with ironies: Stenning's cynicism proves a thin shield against the ultimate existential crisis, while Jeannie's trust in authority proves profoundly misplaced. The profiteering, thuggery, and Dionysian frenzy with which the populace faces their encroaching incineration leaves a lingering question: does humanity deserve to survive?

The stunning, 16:9-enhanced, 2.35:1 transfer showcases matte painter Les Bowie's contribution to the film's sense of scale, while the grain of stock footage augments Guest's gritty realism. A flash of a topless Janet Munro cut from the American version has been restored, as have the fiery tints to the opening and closing sequences.

The British slang and naturalistic, overlapping delivery often render the dialogue unclear, a problem compounded by the absence of subtitles. On a lively commentary hosted by Ted Newsom, Guest clarifies newsroom jargon and obscure Brit colloquialisms. A widescreen trailer, TV and radio spots, a Val Guest bio, and a still gallery with two nude shots of Janet Munro round out the supplement.

Global warming, news blackouts, and myopic environmental policy lend THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE a disturbing contemporary relevance.

—Michael Draine

MY SON THE VAMPIRE

Image Entertainment

\$19.98

A woman (Maria Mercedes) is kidnapped while leaving a ship. The police suspect a crazed scientist, Von Housen (Bela Lugosi), a villain who calls himself "the vampire." It seems this woman has access to the precious uranium that Von Housen needs to create an army of robots to conquer the world. Von Housen is expecting his robot prototype to arrive via the mail, but it ends up at the shop of Old Mother Riley (Arthur Lucan), but this doesn't deter the evil genius who—oh, hell, why am I telling you all this? No one really wants to know the plot of MY SON THE VAMPIRE (1963). What everyone really wants to know is the story behind how Lugosi got stuck in yet another cinematic stiff in the final decade of his life. As any Belaphile worth his garlic knows, Lugosi was in poor health and dire financial need during the 1950s. He'd do anything for a buck, which is evident from his latter-day output.

It seems Bela was in England in 1951 hoping to make some money on a stage tour of his old standby, DRACULA. When the tour failed, Lugosi went looking for some quick cash. An offer came from a poverty row company called Renown Pic-



tures Corporation, who needed a vampire for the latest—and, it turned out, last—entry in a tired series of comedies starring female impersonator Arthur Lucan, who had played a fidgety rat-bag named Old Mother Riley in 14 previous films. Starring opposite him, as Riley's daughter Kitty, was Lucan's spouse, Kitty McShane. The Lucan/McShane marriage was one of the more volatile in film history, and the couple's hot-tempered fights were considered by many to be far more entertaining than their act. By the early fifties, they hated each other so much that they had their scenes in the penultimate Riley picture, OLD MOTHER RILEY'S JUNGLE TREASURE (1951), shot separately. Kitty didn't sign on for Riley #15, missing her chance to act opposite Bela.

So why, you ask, if Bela made this film in 1951, does the copyright on the opening title of MY SON THE VAMPIRE carry a 1963 date, seven years after Lugosi's death? Well, it turns out this film opened in England in 1952 under the name MOTHER RILEY MEETS THE VAMPIRE. Since Mother Riley meant absolutely nothing to American audiences, its salability in the States was questionable. The film was kept mercifully away from American shores for a full 11 years before producer Jack Harris bought it.

Harris hired then-hot recording artist Allan Sherman to sing a new song over the opening credits. ("All he does is drink your blood, 'cause he don't like ginger ale.") Since Sherman had hit big with an album called MY SON THE FOLKSINGER, the film's title became MY SON THE VAMPIRE. Harris didn't give any thought to reshooting the credits, so both Lugosi and Lucan's names were omitted to make way for the new title card. This final humiliation was spared not only the long-departed Bela, but Lucan as well, the cross-dressing comedian having died of a heart attack back in 1954.

If indeed you need to see this picture (if, perhaps, BELA LUGOSI MEETS A BROOKLYN GORILLA has already been checked out at the local video store), the Image DVD may be the closest you'll ever get to a viewable print. Long a title (or titles) in the public domain, this particular edition is still full of abrupt jumps and scratches, but don't hold your breath waiting for an improved version. It's doubtful that MY SON is high on anyone's list of restoration projects. The sound quality is acceptable, though I'm

still not quite sure if I heard one character refer to Mother Riley as "an old faggot" or not. You will, however, be able to hear the change in audio when Lucan steps center stage to sing a number in her shop and it sounds as if an old 78 record has been turned on. Cheesy? You bet. And we wouldn't have it any other way.

—Barry Monush

FIEND WITHOUT A FACE

The Criterion Collection

\$39.95

We all know the drill on fifties sci-fi films: 60 minutes of exposition with a few glimpses of the monster or maybe just actors looking terrified as a camera crawls up their nostrils. Finally, the monster is shown in swift cuts or shadows that conceal its low-budget deficiencies or, perhaps worse, fully reveal it in all its cheesiness. Eye-popping spectacles such as we have today were few and far between.

Then there's FIEND WITHOUT A FACE (1958), whose ending is a lollapalooza. This is, of course, the movie with the flying brains, which, when they break in through boarded-over windows and launch themselves at the cast for the finale, caused more than one teenager to spit-take his soda pop. As adults, we may find them as goofy as they are ghastly, since they're brought to life by rudimentary puppet effects and sub-Harryhausen animation, and their gory time-lapse demises are accompanied by a sound effect approximating particularly liquid flatulence. But the ferocity of the climactic scene effectively stifles any momentary



urge to snicker—even when one brain cocks its head like a cute puppy before attacking—and there's no denying the design of the creatures is cool enough to have made them one of sci-fi's most enduring icons.

Their origin, as thought projections given extra power by atomic energy, is also unusual; although it may seem derivative of FORBIDDEN PLANET (1956), the film is based on a thirties *Weird Tales* story. Scenes of Professor Walgate (Kynaston Reeves) conducting telekinetic experiments with a brain-boosting machine undoubtedly were influenced by the earlier film, however, just as the mixture of sci-fi and horror was likely inspired by Universal's fifties offerings and the Hammer Quatermass films. (In turn, the

climactic siege on the house is echoed in 1968's *THE NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*.)

All things being equal, the hour leading up to the slam-bang finale might seem more of a cheat than usual, since the victims are done in by monsters not just unseen but invisible. Most of these scenes, however, are handled with great suspense, particularly a forest scene when one member of a search party goes astray. Aside from Reeves and a breezy turn by Terence Kilburn (Billy the Pageboy in 1939's *ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*) in the hero's-best-friend role, it is the acting that keeps *FIEND* from hitting the mark as neatly as it might. While Marshall Thompson and Kim Parker aren't bad, or even inadequate, neither quite possesses the chemistry to carry the picture in the way performers such as Richard Denning and Faith Domergue could.

The DVD is loaded with extras, including a documentary and trailers for a clutch of other Richard Gordon features and a very good illustrated essay on the brief spurt of British horror/sci-fi. Gordon himself holds forth so volubly in the audio track that he scarcely needs an interviewer. The widescreen print is generally excellent, although Chapter 9 seems to have eluded the meticulous cleaning boasted of in the booklet.

—Harry H. Long

THE MUMMY'S SHROUD Anchor Bay Entertainment

\$29.98

"Beware the beat of the cloth-wrapped feet!" With that heavy-handed declaration, Hammer Films returned to the land of Egyptian sands and dark, desecrated tombs for 1967's much-maligned thriller, *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD*.

Much like Universal's routine sequels to *THE MUMMY*—an artful 1932 masterpiece of mood, atmosphere and understated horror—*THE MUMMY'S SHROUD* has been dismissed over the years as ludicrous, low-grade hokum. While the movie admittedly ranks in the lesser echelon of Hammer horrors, it does have its modest merits. These unheralded attributes are brought to light through Anchor Bay's DVD edition of this barebones programmer.

Issued through a fan-friendly series called The Hammer Collection, the *SHROUD* disc offers the same superior sound-and-picture presentation and satisfying supplementary features that marked the movie's earlier release on video. In addition to the standard theatrical trailer, the disc also includes a lively promotional trailer for the release of Hammer's third Mummy chiller on the lower half of a double bill with *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN*, another Hammer feature from 1967. An insert card charting the disc's chapter selections reproduces the movie's original poster art. The odd, ill-conceived design features a wide-eyed, oversized mummy

clutching a tiny damsel in his upraised fist while, inexplicably, a tree juts out of the top of his head.

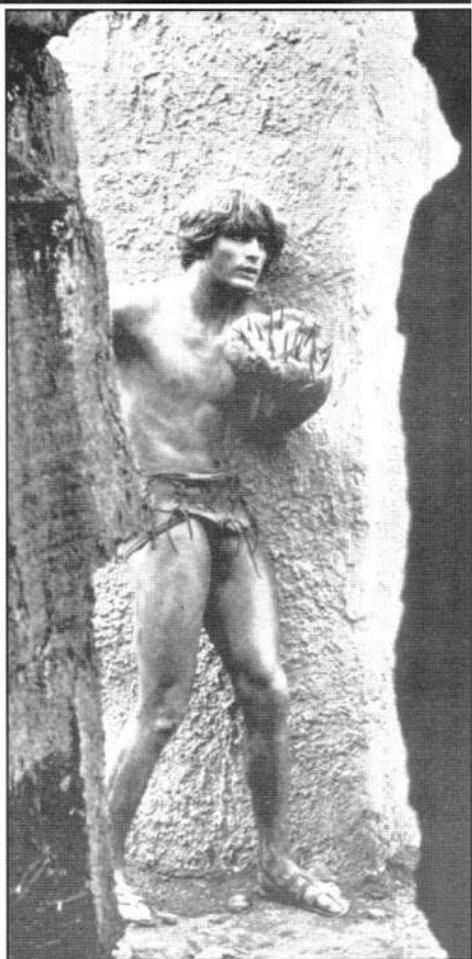
Other bonus features include the half-hour *THE WORLD OF HAMMER* episode, "Mummies, Werewolves, and the Living Dead," which traces Hammer's Mummy franchise from its glory days (Terence Fisher's 1959 Cushing/Lee classic, *THE MUMMY*) to its final dusty gasp (1971's bloody but strangely mummyless *BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB*).

Though flawed and painfully lacking in production values, *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD* is very far from a total failure. The crisp, colorful story centers on twenties-era British archaeologists who invade a sacred tomb and unleash an ancient curse. Though an oft-told tale, it's given efficient energy and panache by Hammer director John Gilling (who also helmed the studio's eerie *PLAQUE OF THE ZOMBIES* in 1966). The film reunites Gilling with classy character actor Andre Morell, who starred in *ZOMBIES* and played key character roles in Hammer's *THE HOUND OF THE BAS-KERVILLES* (1959) and *SHE* (1965). The actor adds style and stature to the proceedings as Sir Basil Walden, leader of the ill-fated expedition. As always, Morell is excellent—though his role is considerably smaller than his top billing might indicate.

As the tale's imperialist villain Stanley Preston, John Phillips is sufficiently ruthless. Preston is a pompous, self-serving, money-grubbing aristocrat who sets the mummy's curse in motion. David Buck and Maggie Kimberly are hopelessly stilted as the romantic leads, while craggy Catherine Lacey goes way over the top as a creepy fortune teller. Hammer stuntman Eddie Powell makes a suitably menacing mummy.

THE MUMMY'S SHROUD occupies a special place in Hammer history for a memorable portrayal by the studio's supreme character actor, Michael Ripper. In what may be his largest role in any Hammer film, Ripper delivers a gentle, moving performance as Longbarrow, Preston's long-suffering secretary. *THE MUMMY'S SHROUD* offers a vivid reminder that Ripper always added a touch of heart and soul to even the most pedestrian Hammer horrors.

—Terry Pace



FELLINI SATYRICON
MGM Entertainment

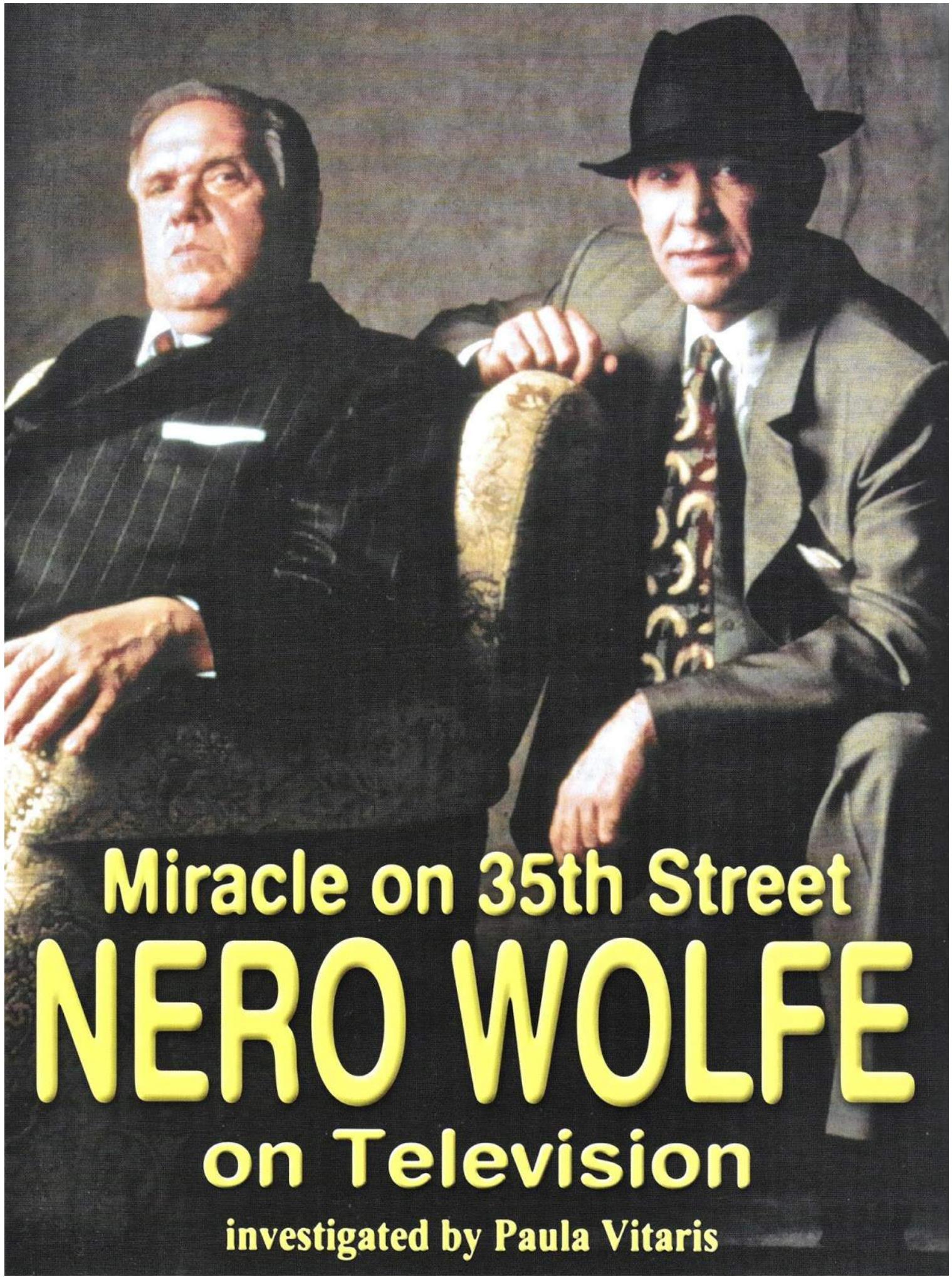
\$19.98

Set in ancient Rome and, as the credits say, "freely adapted from the Petronius classic," *FELLINI SATYRICON* (1970) begins with Encolpio (Martin Potter) and Ascilto (Hiram Keller), students and lovers, separating and dividing up their possessions—including Gitone (Max Born), who chooses to go with Ascilto.

Encolpio loses his home in an earthquake and spends some time in the company of a poet friend, Eumolpo (Salvo Randone). After a night of dining and drinking, Encolpio awakens to find himself captive on a ship, along with Ascilto, Gitone, and many other men, all destined to be the playthings of Caesar. The Captain, Lica (Alain Cuny), takes a fancy to Encolpio and the two are wed. The honeymoon is short, though, as an invading force soon beheads Lica.

On land again, a rich couple (Joseph Wheeler and Lucia Bose) free their slaves and commit suicide. Encolpio and Ascilto arrive at the nearly deserted palace and, finding one remaining female slave, enjoy her company. Next, the two find themselves conned into helping kidnap a hermaphroditic demigod. The demigod dies from exposure to the sun and they flee the scene.

Continued on page 64



Miracle on 35th Street
NERO WOLFE
on Television

investigated by Paula Vitaris

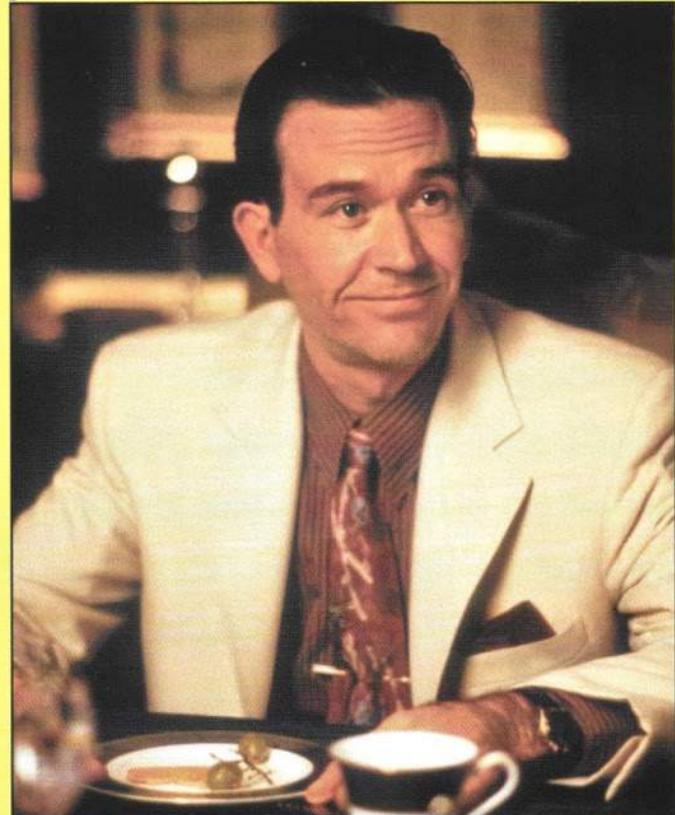
Wolfe had had the Times, and a book, and probably, while I was out, his weekly battle with television. That may occur almost any evening, when he has got disgusted with a book, but usually it's a Sunday afternoon, because that's when TV is supposed to be dressed for company. He turns on one channel after another, getting grimmer and grimmer, until he is completely assured that it's getting worse instead of better, and quits.

—Death of a Doxy (1965)

Nero Wolfe—genius private detective, gourmand extraordinaire, and orchid expert, whose crime solving spans 41 years and 72 books and stories by Rex Stout—seems to be echoing the opinions of his creator, who was no fan of TV. But Wolfe would have good reason to change his mind about Sunday television if he were able to tune in the A&E cable channel's Sunday night series *NERO WOLFE*, based, as faithfully as possible, on the Stout books. The series began life as a single television movie, *THE GOLDEN SPIDERS*, based on the 1953 novel and starring Maury Chaykin as Wolfe and Timothy Hutton as his loyal assistant and legman, Archie Goodwin. Producers Michael Jaffe and Howard Braunstein intended it to be the first in a proposed series of *NERO WOLFE* telefilms, but *THE GOLDEN SPIDERS'* March 5, 2000 broadcast was so successful that A&E asked Jaffe and Braunstein to turn their *NERO WOLFE* movies into a regular weekly series that would be shot in Toronto.

The first season proper began with a two-part adaptation of one of the best and most revered Wolfe mysteries, *The Doorbell Rang* (1965), on April 22, 2001. The series, which takes its swift pace and visual design directly from the classic movies of the forties and fifties, was an immediate hit. Besides *The Doorbell Rang*, the first season adapted three more novels, *Over My Dead Body* (1945), *Prisoner's Base* (1952), and *Champagne For One* (1960), and five stories, "Eeny Meeny Murder Mo" (1962), "Disguise for Murder"

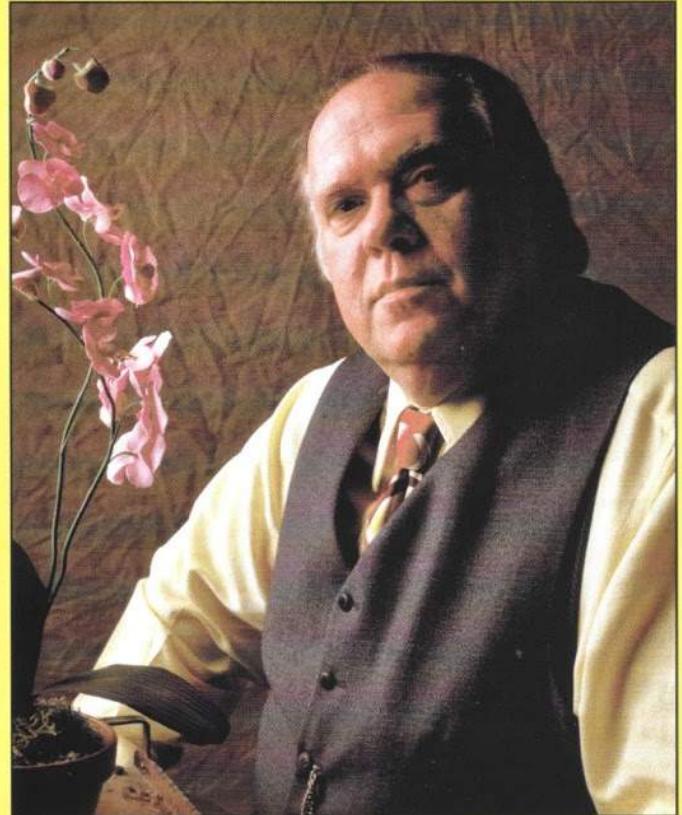
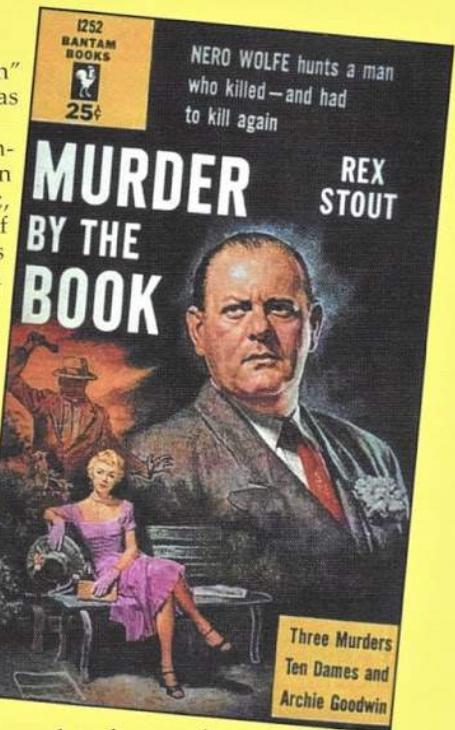
PAGE 28 AND BELOW: Timothy Hutton and Maury Chaykin have proven to be the most accurate and entertaining embodiments of Archie Goodwin and Nero Wolfe ever presented outside of a Rex Stout novel (one of which is pictured ABOVE RIGHT).



(1950), "Door to Death" (1949), and "A Christmas Party" (1958).

Additional cast members include Canadian actor Colin Fox as Fritz, Wolfe's personal chef and majordomo of his elegant Manhattan brownstone; Bill Smitrovich as the gruff Inspector Cramer, head of Manhattan's Homicide West and Wolfe's nemesis and occasional ally; and Saul Rubinek as Archie's newsman pal, Lon Cohen. The cast is rounded out by Conrad Dunn as Saul Panzer, Trent McMullen as Orrie Cather, and Fulvio Cecere as Fred Durkin, the three private eyes Wolfe calls on when he requires additional help.

The show's second season, which began April 14 with an adaptation of the novel *Death of a Doxy* (1966), has been expanded from the first season. In addition to *Doxy*, there are three novels, *The Mother Hunt* (1963), *The Silent Speaker* (1948), and *Too Many Clients* (1960), and eight stories: "The Next Witness" (1960), "Die Like a Dog" (1965), "Poison a la Carte" (1960), "Murder is Corny" (1964), "Help Wanted, Male" (1949), "The Cop Killer" (1952), "Immune to Murder" (1957), and "Before I Die" (1949).





LEFT: Columbia Pictures introduced Rex Stout's creations to filmgoers with questionable success in *MEET NERO WOLFE* (1936). The corpulent Wolfe was played by the corpulent Edward Arnold; the studly Archie Goodwin was the studless Lionel Stander. **B BELOW:** Sydney Greenstreet (pictured without Ruth in 1948's *RUTHLESS*) briefly played Wolfe on radio.

Rex Stout began his Nero Wolfe series with *Fer-De-Lance* in 1934 and ended with *A Family Affair* in 1975. Stout, who was born in 1886 into a Quaker family in Indiana, grew up mostly in Kansas. He was a brilliant child and prodigious reader of his father's extensive library. As a young man, he joined the Navy and served as a yeoman on President Theodore Roosevelt's yacht, and then moved to New York, where he began a writing career, publishing short stories (several of which contain prototypes for the characters in the Wolfe series) and a few early novels. He put the career on hold and went to work with his brother, during which time he devised a unique school banking system for students. Married, he traveled in Europe and spent time in Paris, where he began writing again. He returned to the United States and, after publishing four psychological novels, drew upon his love of detective fiction, including his favorites Arthur Conan Doyle and C. K. Chesterton, as well as his own personal history, and created the characters of Archie Goodwin and his seventh-of-a-ton boss, Nero Wolfe.

Wolfe's insular world—he virtually never leaves his brownstone house located on West 35th Street in Manhattan—arrived full-blown in the first Wolfe novel. His singular intellect and imagination, his never-to-be-altered routine, his corpulence, and his love of great food and beautiful orchids, as seen through the first-person eyes of that equally singular man of action, Archie Goodwin, immediately caught the public's attention. Archie's narrative voice—his lively wit, his intelligence, and keen sense of observation—is every bit as vital as any of Wolfe's quirks. As P.G. Wodehouse observed in the foreword to John McAleer's *Rex Stout: A Biography* (1977) "Stout's supreme triumph was the creation of Archie Goodwin."

Under Wolfe's tutelage, Archie has come to appreciate a certain routine and the finer things in life, such as fine food and well-tailored suits—but unlike Wolfe, he loves the ladies (though a confirmed bachelor), is pragmatic, and needs a good walk to expend excess energy. While the mysteries are often fascinating, the real pleasure of Stout's writing is the way Wolfe and Archie's personalities rub up against each other, and how they both rub up against the characters they encounter. Some of the most delightful passages describe breaks in Wolfe's routine, often when he is forced to leave his house. While there is much to enjoy in his other stories and novels, Stout's true genius as a writer surfaced in the Nero Wolfe series, and after World War II, he concentrated only on Wolfe.

The world of Nero Wolfe changed little over four decades, but that was one of its attractions. No matter the

year—and a story was always set in the year it was written—Nero Wolfe and his household remain the same. Wolfe is a native of Montenegro whose background is shrouded in mystery. He fought and starved in World War I, and after various adventures (including, it seems, spy work) he ended up in New York City, where he bought the brownstone and entered the private detective business, the best way to put his mind to work and to earn the money to ensure the comfortable lifestyle he desired. With a turbulent early life behind him, Wolfe loathes leaving his elegant home, making it a strict rule never to go out on business. Instead, he depends on the assistance of three men who live with him at the brownstone: Fritz, Theodore Horstmann

(who tends Wolfe's orchids), and the athletic and youthful Archie, the country boy from Chillicothe, Ohio, who thoroughly knows Manhattan and its colorful characters, and brings Wolfe suspects and witnesses for interrogation.

Two years after the publication of *Fer-De-Lance*, Columbia Pictures released a feature film version titled *MEET NERO WOLFE* (1936). In typical Hollywood fashion, the movie played havoc with Stout's characters. Edward Arnold starred as a bizarrely cheerful Wolfe and Lionel Stander played Archie as a native New Yorker wiseguy. (Joel McCrea would have been a far better choice to play the Ohio-born Archie.) Even worse, Archie was plagued with a peroxide blonde of a girlfriend named Mazie (Dennis Moore), who kept pestering him, in a thick Noo Yawk accent, about marriage. (Stout's Wolfe and Archie would never have even gone near such a creature, unless she had information about a case.) Columbia followed up *MEET NERO WOLFE* with *THE LEAGUE OF FRIGHTENED MEN* (1937), based on Stout's second Wolfe mystery, published in 1935. Walter Connolly substituted for Edward Arnold and Stander returned as Archie.

Wolfe was then absent from view for more than three decades, but he could be heard on the radio. (Stout himself was a frequent presence on radio commentary and news shows.) Santos Ortega played Wolfe in a 1943-44 ABC radio series (with John Gibson as Archie), and Francis X. Bushman, once a major star of the silent cinema, played him in 1945-46 (with Elliot Lewis as Archie). The third radio Nero Wolfe was Sydney Greenstreet, who played him in 1951-52 in the NBC series, *THE NEW ADVENTURES OF NERO WOLFE*, written by Alfred Bester. Greenstreet seemed a natural as Wolfe—he was one of the few actors Stout thought

*Continued on
page 34*



Meet Nero Wolfe

by Ken Hanke

Nearly every admirer of Rex Stout's orchid-loving, beer-drinking, reclusive detective knows that Columbia Pictures adapted the first Nero Wolfe novel, *Fer De Lance* (1934), for the screen as MEET NERO WOLFE (1936). Very few, however, have actually seen the film, which has largely drifted into legend as a travesty of the book and its characters. Certainly, the casting of the totally inappropriate Lionel Stander as Archie Goodwin is enough to make a diehard Wolfe fan cautious, and it's well known that Rex Stout was sufficiently displeased with both MEET NERO WOLFE and its equally obscure follow-up, THE LEAGUE OF FRIGHTENED MEN (1937), that he refused to sell the film rights to further Wolfe adventures to the studio. Still, Edward Arnold seems a pretty suitable candidate for Wolfe, and since it's not always wise to trust legend in such matters, and authors are not invariably the best judges of the transformation of their work from the printed page to the screen, there's always been a certain curiosity about whether or not MEET NERO WOLFE is as bad as is casually assumed.

The answer is an authoritative yes and no. Basically, the film is neither quite the travesty it's been painted as, nor is it anywhere near being a faithful recreation of the world of Nero Wolfe. However, it does make some effort at being faithful to the book. Nearly all of its plot—exempting one crucial scene and the climax—is almost exactly that of the novel. Many of its missteps are clearly the result of screenwriters Joseph Anthony (a brief-lived Columbia staff writer), Bruce Manning (author of the source novel for 1934's THE NINTH GUEST and screenwriter of the previous year's THE LONE WOLF RETURNS), and Howard J. Green (who had worked on such genre-oriented films as 1929's THE DONOVAN AFFAIR and 1935's STAR OF MIDNIGHT) attempting to telescope as much of Stout's Wolfe into the film's 73-minute running time. Is it absurd and a "betrayal" of Stout to make Wolfe's orchid room a kind of greenhouse offshoot to his office? Of course, it is, but it's also a clever device that keeps the orchid-growing obsession in the action without breaking

from the fairly complicated plot. Other departures—such as transforming chef Fritz Brenner into the Swedish Olaf, so the character can be played (for no very good reason, except that he was on the payroll) by John Qualen—are less explicable.

The film's setup is good and follows Stout's murder method on a golf course almost exactly, with college president Edgar Barstow (Boyd Irwin) claiming, "A mosquito bit me just as I hit the ball," and collapsing soon afterwards—his death written off as heart failure. Of course, it's not heart failure at all or else we wouldn't have a plot, but the film—like the book—takes a circuitous route to involve Wolfe in the discovery of this fact. First showing the murder and the subsequent blackmail attempt of Carlo Maringola (Juan Torre, familiar to genre fans as the romantic lead in the Spanish-language version of 1931's CHARLIE CHAN CARRIES ON) is a more cinematic approach than the novel affords, but the film lacks the ability to leisurely establish the characters of Wolfe and Archie and has to take another approach. The results are decidedly mixed. As expository writing, the thumbnail sketches provided by the film's dialogue aren't bad, but the best the writers can come up with is to saddle Archie with a more-annoying-than-funny girlfriend, who can feed the viewer information about Wolfe and Archie's position in his household.

We first meet Archie and his decidedly unStoutian girlfriend, Mazie (Dennie Moore, a sort of lower-rung Isabel Jewell, in her first credited role), outside the famous brownstone. Archie valiantly tries to gain entrance by ringing the doorbell nonstop. "How long do you have to work for Nero Wolfe to get a key of your own?" asks Mazie. "He hasn't got a key himself," Archie tells her. "He doesn't need one," she counters, adding, "He never goes out." The exchange also affords Mazie the opportunity to call Wolfe "that beer-guzzling orchid grower," thereby neatly establishing his character before we meet him. It's

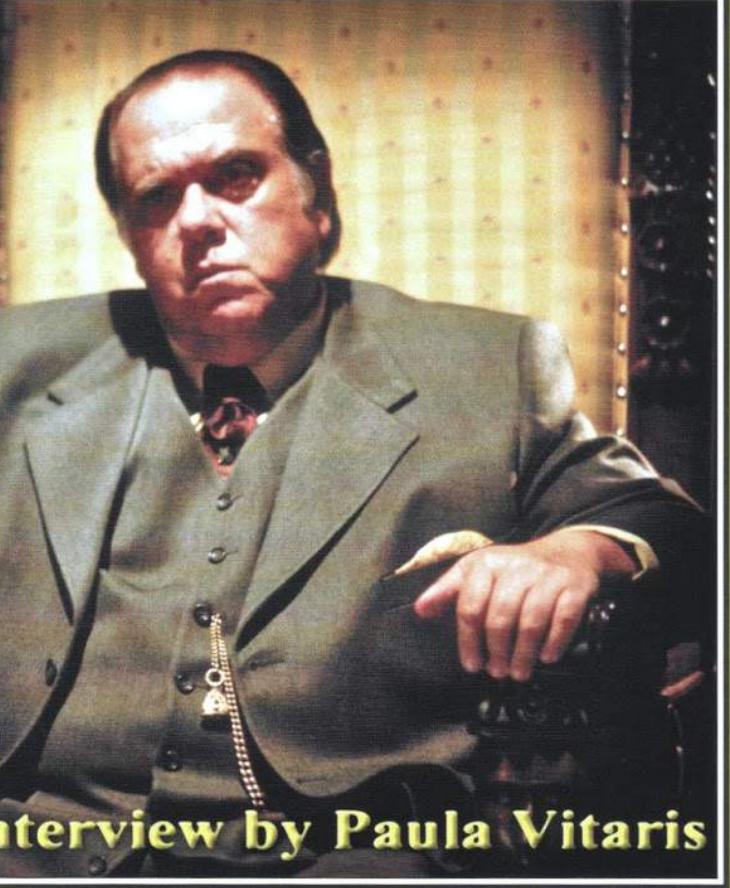
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LEFT: MEET NERO WOLFE (1936) got at least some of the details right in recreating Wolfe's World for the movies. Here, Archie Goodwin (Lionel Stander) discusses a murder case while Wolfe (Edward Arnold) concentrates on his beloved orchids. RIGHT: Needless to say, MEET NERO WOLFE also got many of the details wrong. For one thing, Hollywood transformed Fritz, a French Swiss in the novels, into the Swedish Olaf (John Qualen). Presumably, the cuckoo clock on the wall remained Swiss.



Filling the Role

MAURY CHAYKIN



Interview by Paula Vitaris

If you saw *DANCES WITH WOLVES* (1990), then you will remember the mentally unhinged Army major who sent Kevin Costner to the frontier—and then, offscreen, blew his brains out. The actor who made the indelible impression as the suicidal major was Maury Chaykin, now in a role as different as can be, as the supremely self-controlled Nero Wolfe in the A&E series of the same name.

Chaykin possesses a distinguished résumé in theater, film, and television, and he is one of the most in-demand character actors of the day. Born in Canada and raised in Brooklyn, he attended the State University of New York at Buffalo, where he and fellow theater students formed an avant-garde troupe called the Swamp Fox Theater Group Koshare. Although never an official part of the university's performing groups, the Swamp Fox actors became a popular entity on campus, and drew much attention when they crashed the 1970 Festival of Underground Theater in Toronto, where they became a surprise hit.

After graduation, Chaykin moved to North Buffalo, joining the American Contemporary Theatre and studying with luminaries such as Samuel Beckett. He moved to New York and worked in theater, and then in 1974 returned to Toronto, where he became part of the experimental theater scene, occasionally returning to New York to act in off-Broadway productions. In the late seventies, he began working in Canadian and, eventually, American films. His starring role in Donald Brittain's *CANADA'S SWEET-*

HEART: THE SAGA OF HAL C. BANKS won him a 1986 Nellie Award. Other notable Canadian films include Atom Egoyan's *THE ADJUSTER* (1991) and *THE SWEET HEREAFTER* (1997). He won the 1995 Genie Award from the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television for *WHALE MUSIC* (1994), in which he played Desmond Howl, a reclusive former rock star unbalanced by the death of his brother and obsessed with composing a symphony for whales.

Chaykin has played a wide range of roles in dozens of other films, including *WARGAMES* (1983), *MRS. SOFFEL* (1984), *MY COUSIN VINNY* (1992), *DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS* (1995), and *A LIFE LESS ORDINARY* (1997). As a "Man in Wheelchair," he shared a few seconds of screen time with *NERO WOLFE* costar Timothy Hutton in the 1985 film *TURK 182!* Chaykin has also appeared in made-for-TV movies and guest-starred on several TV series, including *THE TWILIGHT ZONE*, *DUKE SOUTH*, *LA FEMME NIKITA* (for which he won a Gemini award), *LEXX*, and *OZ*. Then came *NERO WOLFE*

Maury Chaykin: I received a call from my agent in Los Angeles saying that I was getting an offer to play Nero Wolfe in a two-hour TV movie. My first question was, "Who is Nero Wolfe?" because I'm not a mystery fan, nor have I ever been. The only familiarity I had with the novel was as a child. We had a library in my home in Brooklyn, and on the edge of one of the books in the library were the words "Rex Stout" and "Death of a Doxy."

I always remember seeing it. I had no idea what it was, nor did I ever pick up the book. It occurred to me, when I visited my parents after they had moved to Long Island, that the book was also part of the library up there, and I noticed it. That was my only connection with Rex Stout and Nero Wolfe! So I read the screenplay and quite liked it, and heard that Timothy Hutton was already involved in it, went down to New York to meet the director [Bill Duke] and Tim, and that's how it happened.

Scarlet Street: Once you agreed to play the role, did you read the novels and stories?

MC: I read about four or five of the novels, and read some research material, books that had been written about Rex Stout and Nero Wolfe and the brownstone, and articles about the novels and about Rex Stout, and did some research. It's a difficult thing to do, but I decided that I wasn't going to be intimidated by the history of someone who had written 70 stories. It wasn't really useful to me to start reading every novel and become a Wolfe-o-phile overnight, because we only had a couple of months preparation to do the movie. I did the reading that I could, but I wanted to preserve my own interpretation of the role by not inundating myself, so that I would freeze myself into not being able to play the role. (Laughs)

SS: At that point, too, you didn't know it was going to be picked up as a regular series.

MC: No, we didn't. It was clearly a one-shot event. There was no real talk about making it into a series, although we all knew it was a distinct possibility that

A&E would be interested in doing it. They were going to await the response of the TV movie before they made any moves; that was very clear. I think we had contracts to do two other TV movies.

SS: But not as a series. As you delved into the material, what was your initial impression of Nero Wolfe and his household?

MC: The attraction was the oddity of having this large, agoraphobic man who had a genius for detective work, but who did not want to do detective work. He basically wanted to be with his orchids and eat great food and search out new culinary and orchidaceous experiences, but had to support his lavish lifestyle by detective work. He was a reluctant genius. And that was fascinating to me, as was the fact that he cohabited with Archie Goodwin, Fritz Brenner, and Theodore Horstmann in the same house. There were these three men living in the house with this autocrat genius, who terribly depended on them to keep his life going. The dynamic of the relationships was fascinating, rather than the actual mysteries or the mechanics of the whodunit, which Wolfe—and I—find kind of boring, in a way. (Laughs) What I found interesting was the codependency of these people, and more the dark side of what goes on in the house—and the funny side. When you stand back and look at them living together, it is a bit odd.

SS: Did anything else appeal to you?

MC: I liked the richness of all these New York characters and the various eras that Stout wrote in—the thirties, forties, fifties, and sixties. I'm old enough to know what life was like in the sixties and seventies in New York, because I grew up there. A lot of those Manhattan characters really ring true. Stout wrote a lot about high society in New York and all the pathos and sickness of it, and he had a great sense of real characters in all their ugliness and beauty. He was a really great writer. That was one of the other things that really attracted me to the idea of doing this on an ongoing basis—it's such good writing. Adapted well, we can have a lot of fun with it.

SS: How would you describe the relationship between Archie and Wolfe?

MC: I would say very codependent. They very much rely on each other emotionally for their existence. Wolfe is terrified that Archie is going to leave; I think there's an underlying theme of his fear of being left alone. Archie's always teasing him about it. Archie being so flirtatious, there's a constant fear with Wolfe that Archie will fall in love and leave the house. (Laughs)

SS: To the point that Wolfe will dress up in a Santa Claus suit and leave the house in CHRISTMAS PARTY, to find out if Archie is really going to get married.

MC: Exactly! That's a manifestation of his underlying fear, but I think it's a constant thing. Likewise with Fritz. Wolfe has a very intense relationship with these men. I think that's what, to some extent, drives the novels—the insistence upon keeping up what is already existing and set into motion. Wolfe tends to the orchids at a

Behind the Big Man

TIMOTHY HUTTON as Archie Goodwin

Timothy Hutton, star, executive producer and frequently director of A&E's *NERO WOLFE* series, first grabbed the movie world's attention in 1980, winning a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his portrayal of a suicidal adolescent in his first feature film, *ORDINARY PEOPLE*. The son of actor Jim Hutton (who also played a famous detective, in the 1975 series *THE ADVENTURES OF ELLERY QUEEN*), Hutton had already shown an affinity for playing troubled and sensitive youths in several made-for-TV movies, including *FRIENDLY FIRE* (1979) and *THE LONG WAY HOME* (1981).

When the military academy drama *TAPS*, became the smash hit of the Christmas 1981 season, Hutton briefly found himself the latest teen idol. His following roles, though, took him into risky and adult material, in Sidney Lumet's *DANIEL* (1983) and Fred Schepisi's *ICEMAN* (1984), *THE FALCON AND THE SNOWMAN* (1984), and *Q&A* (1990). His feature credits over the past 20 years include *TURK 182!* (1985), *MADE IN HEAVEN* (1987), *THE DARK HALF* (1993), *DETERRENCE* (1999), and, most recently, John Sayles' *SUNSHINE STATE* (2002).

Hutton's acting career also encompasses stage work—on Broadway he appeared in *LOVE LETTERS* and *PRELUDE FOR A KISS*—and telefilms, including the superb *MR. AND MRS. LOVING* (1996), which he starred in

and produced for Showtime, and *ALDRICH AMES: TRAITOR WITHIN* (1998), also for Showtime.

Behind the camera, Hutton wrote and directed "Grandpa's Ghost," an episode for the television anthology series *AMAZING STORIES*, directed music videos, and directed a feature film, *DIGGING TO CHINA* (1998), starring Kevin Bacon and future *NERO WOLFE* cast member (and renowned stage actress) Marian Seldes.

NERO WOLFE marks Hutton's debut as actor, producer, and director in a weekly series, a situation that came about almost accidentally . . .

Scarlet Street: How did the single film *THE GOLDEN SPIDERS* become the series *NERO WOLFE*?

Timothy Hutton: Well, first of all, everyone knew that there were these wonderful books, but when we did *THE GOLDEN SPIDERS*, nobody was thinking about doing any more. Nobody really was that interested in it becoming a series. The approach became, why not just film a group of these books, see how that goes?

SS: You're not only acting, but serving as an executive producer and directing several episodes as well.

TH: Michael Jaffe is the executive producer; he's the one that brought us all together. He is the biggest fan of the

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right for the part—but instead gave a hammy performance. Four actors (Wally Maher, Harry Bartell, Herb Ellis, and Larry Dobkin) voiced Archie. THE NEW ADVENTURES lasted 25 episodes.

Stout frequently received, and rejected, offers for movie and television rights for the Wolfe books. (One producer even suggested Zero Mostel as Wolfe and Dick Cavett as Archie!) Stout did sell the rights to Radiotelevision Italiana for a series of movies, made in the late sixties and early seventies, starring Tino Buazzelli as Wolfe and Paolo Ferrari as Archie. According to John McAleer, Stout agreed to sell the rights to the Italian series "only because he would never see them."

After Stout's death, his family marketed the television rights, and the producer of the current A&E series, Michael Jaffe, tried to purchase them. He lost out to Paramount Television, which produced a 1977 television movie, NERO WOLFE, an adaptation of *The Doorbell Rang* intended to be the pilot for a possible series. Thayer David (known to TV viewers as one of the stars of the original DARK SHADOWS and to filmgoers as the vile duckslayer Count Saknussem in 1959's JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH) played Wolfe and a bland Tom Mason played Archie. Not surprisingly, this version played fast and loose with the original story, even implying a romantic relationship between the notoriously woman-shy Wolfe and wealthy widow Rachel Bruner (Anne Baxter), at whose behest Wolfe had taken on one of his most formidable foes, the FBI.

David died in 1978, which temporarily put plans for a NERO WOLFE weekly series on hold, but Paramount tried again four years later. William Conrad, sporting a most unWolfelike beard, played the corpulent sleuth, and a young, pre-MATT HOUSTON Lee Horsley took on the role of Archie. The new NERO WOLFE did give us the brownstone, the rooftop nursery, a housebound Wolfe, and an active Archie, but that was about it. The NBC series updated the setting to contemporary times (1981), which meant Archie, always so fastidious about his wardrobe, could be seen wearing turtlenecks and (horror!) blue jeans. Inspector Cramer (George Miller) was a brisk professional in three-piece suits rather than Stout's rumpled detective, and Wolfe himself was transformed into a not particularly fascinating eccentric, who in one instance became uncharacteristically nostalgic about a lost love. The show was a mix of new stories and none-too-faithful adaptations of the books, and lasted only 14 episodes, falling victim to low ratings.

And that brings us to the current incarnation of NERO WOLFE, courtesy of Jaffe/Braunstein Productions, which has produced many TV movies as well as A&E's 100 CENTRE STREET. Producer Michael Jaffe has been a fan of the Nero Wolfe mysteries for 30 years and, after losing the television rights to Paramount, continued to enquire after them as the years went by. He also made the acquaintance of the Stout family, becoming friends with one of Stout's daughters, Rebecca. As Jaffe notes, "Good things come to those who wait," and when A&E expressed a Wolfeian interest, he was finally able to buy the rights.

Jaffe had considered a number of Wolfe novels for the first movie. "There are three or four really extraordinary novels—*The Silent Speaker*, *In the Best Families*, and *The Doorbell Rang*, for example," he says. "These are some of the most famous and most complex and most amazing stories in the series, but we didn't want to start with those particular ones for a whole complex of reasons. We wanted to pick a story that had activity in it so that we could slowly bring people into the static milieu of Nero Wolfe's house. THE GOLDEN SPIDERS took you outside. There's a gunfight and a tough interrogation scene. It was a very strong story with a lot of pathos, because a young boy is murdered and Wolfe has to deal with his mother. So that was why we chose that one."

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But who to play these iconic characters, Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin? Maury Chaykin was the only logical choice for Wolfe, says Jaffe. "If you stop and think about it, exceptionally talented actors who weigh 250-plus pounds are few and far between. If you're in the casting business, you could come up with the two or three names pretty damn quickly. I don't think there was a dissenting voice when Maury's name came up. Nobody needed to read him or meet him. Everybody knew him. In the industry, he's a very well-known actor—less so, of course, to the general public, but maybe now we've rectified that."

For Archie, Jaffe immediately thought of Wolfe fan Timothy Hutton. "I always felt Tim was about as perfect as you could get for Archie," he says. "Outstanding actor, superb intellect, loves the books, works harder than any two people I know, great creative instincts. I'm not patting myself on the back; everybody knows that about Tim. I was right. He's fabulous. He is Archie."

When A&E told Jaffe and Braunstein that they wanted to make NERO WOLFE a regular series, they agreed, contingent upon A&E's willingness to stick to the original ground rules, and if Timothy Hutton, who had no plans to tie himself down to a series, would return as Archie. Hutton decided he would, once A&E agreed that the series would follow Jaffe's requirements regarding period and style, and his commitment was such that he also agreed to become one of the show's executive producers. Hutton, who had directed music videos and an independent feature, DIGGING TO CHINA (1997), also directed several first-season episodes and will do so again for the second season. "Tim had never done a television series before and had never intended to do one," Jaffe says. "If he were going to do a series, it wasn't going to be about money; it was going to be about making sure that the show failed or succeeded because of decisions he was making, rather than some committee. That was critical to him. He is as responsible as anyone else for executing our vision for the show."

Why have the Nero Wolfe stories inspired such a large and faithful following among mystery fans? "There's something so dynamic and wonderful about Wolfe and Archie, Fritz and their whole world," comments producer Sharon Doyle, who is also the series' sole full-time staff writer. "There's nothing like it. The pairing of Archie and Wolfe together provides real entertainment. Their constant back and forth, one-upmanship, and struggle for power is truly fascinating. Archie has this impetuosity, but he's much more logical than Wolfe in some ways, and it drives him batty when Wolfe makes these creative leaps. Wolfe's is not a logical process and he is very clear about that. Something sticks in his brain—a little niggle, a little inconsistency, the way somebody holds a cigar—and it won't go away and finally he makes sense of it."

However, Doyle adds, behind the power struggle is a great deal of largely unspoken emotion. "Archie and Wolfe are lost without each other—they really care about each other. Every once in a while it will show up, like when Wolfe goes with Dora Chapin hoping to find a missing Archie in *The League of Frightened Men* [not yet adapted for A&E]. It's the same in A CHRISTMAS PARTY, which is the first episode I wrote. Wolfe always says things like, 'I have this fat to protect me from emotions.' And he feels all these things. It's one of those inverted equations where people bury their emotions by covering them up with gentlemanly behavior."

While other shows based on the Wolfe stories have made massive changes in Stout's original material, the A&E series is unique in that it doesn't make changes for change's sake. The stories and novels are compressed for the sake of time and budget, but the producers otherwise adhere to Stout's plotlines and characters as much as possible. The sets (production design by Lindsey Hermer-Bell)

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Give the Man a Cigar

BILL SMITROVICH

interview by Paula Vitaris

He was born to play that role," says NERO WOLFE producer Michael Jaffe of Bill Smitrovich, who is the cigar-chomping Inspector Cramer, head of Manhattan's Homicide West squad, on the hit A&E series. "I remember Bill on CRIME STORY in the mid-eighties and there was never any question in my mind. I never thought about anybody else, I never wanted anybody else. I've worked with him subsequently on movies. We're good buddies and Tim Hutton loved the idea and we just had to make it happen."

One can understand Jaffe's enthusiasm for Bill Smitrovich, one of today's busiest character actors. Smitrovich captures perfectly Cramer's gruffness, his frustration with Wolfe and Archie, his honesty and his sense of right and wrong. Inspector Cramer is another in a long line of movie and TV cops with whom Smitrovich has been associated, especially in his collaborations with director Michael Mann, for whom he played a corrupt cop in the pilot for MIAMI VICE, Sgt. Danny Krycek in CRIME STORY, and forensic scientist Lloyd Bowman in MANHUNTER.

Nevertheless, cops are only one aspect of Smitrovich's screen persona. He has played doctors, military men, and many other roles—but it is probably for the caring dad, Drew Fletcher, in the ABC family drama LIFE GOES ON, that he is most remembered by the television audience.

A native of Bridgeport, Connecticut, Smitrovich has also been active in theater. He received a master's degree

from Smith College and has taught theater arts at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He is a founding member of the No Theatre Company, which is associated with Chicago's renowned Wooster Group. Smitrovich's early stage work includes appearances at the Humana Festival at the Actor's Theatre of Louisville, the Long Wharf Theatre, and the West Side Arts Theater. In recent years, he has performed at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in plays as diverse as A.R. Gurney's FAR EAST (which then went on to Lincoln Center and a broadcast on PBS), Thornton Wilder's THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH (as Mr. Antrobus), and Shakespeare's THE WINTER'S TALE.

Smitrovich currently divides his time between NERO WOLFE in Toronto and THE PRACTICE in Los Angeles, where he plays District Attorney Walsh.

Scarlet Street: What did you know about NERO WOLFE when you took the role of Inspector Cramer?

Bill Smitrovich: Unfortunately, I didn't know anything about NERO WOLFE or Rex Stout, but I was glad to be introduced to them. It's really exciting for an actor—for this particular actor, anyway—to be able to read the books and flesh out the character, because you learn so much more in a book. It almost does your subtextual work for you. It serves as a source of reference and inspiration.

SS: Have you read them all or just the ones for the shows you're going to do?

BS: When I have time, I'll read other ones. I read *Red Threads*, of course [first in a projected series of novels about Inspector Cramer]. I've read all the books that we've produced as films and some we haven't—*The League of Frightened Men*, and maybe about four or five others that we haven't done.

SS: What made you want to take on another law enforcement character?

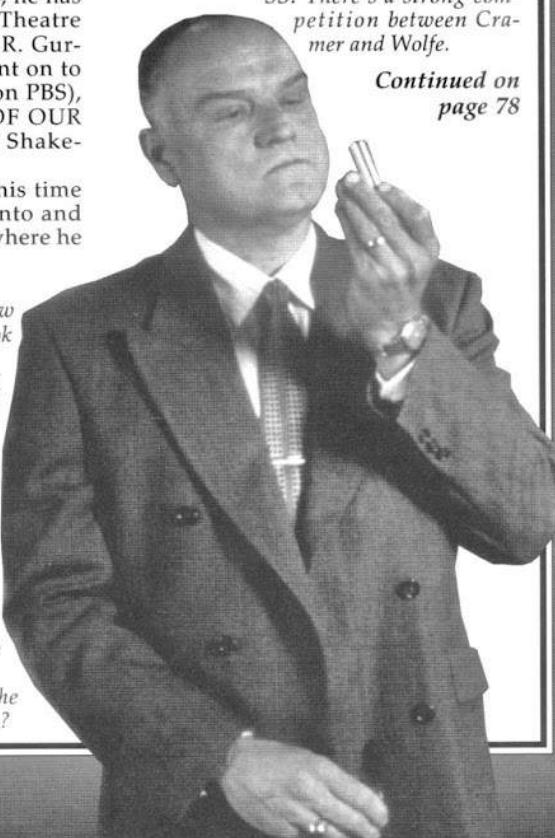
BS: Oh, I love the period. I love the Hechtian, Damon Runyonesque style of the books, the way the characters speak, the wise guy stuff and the patter and the banter between Goodwin and Wolfe and Cramer. I just enjoy really good dialogue, and this particular dialogue is much like Kaufman and Hart, Runyon and Hecht, and HIS GIRL FRIDAY and THE FRONT PAGE. I love the quality of those characters, the rata-tat-tat of them. There's a musicality to them and even the rhythm and the tempo of their lives, like when you go into a press room and hear the typewriters clicking away. In a police station or a crowd at Grand Central, you can feel the ebb and flow of people's voices. I really think that all great art aspires to music. I use that quite a bit in how I feel about my characters and how I play them.

SS: What makes Inspector Cramer tick?

BS: What makes him tick is his unrelenting desire to outsmart Wolfe some day. (Laughs) His heart is in the right place; he believes in public service. What frustrates Cramer is Wolfe's opulent lifestyle. He doesn't have it. He doesn't really aspire to it, but what he wants is to bring people to justice and be half as smart as Wolfe. I don't think he has a tactful bone in his body, and he goes at things mostly like a bulldog.

SS: There's a strong competition between Cramer and Wolfe.

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He's there at the beginning, in the first Nero Wolfe novel, *Fer-De-Lance* (1934), when Archie Goodwin writes, "But it was Fritz who went for the beer."

And he's there at the very end, in the second to last sentence of the final novel, *A Family Affair* (1975), when Wolfe tells Archie, "If Fritz is up, bring him and three glasses."

Fritz is Fritz Brenner, personal chef to Wolfe (one of the most demanding gourmands ever to appear on the printed page) and a highly cherished resident of the brownstone on Manhattan's West 35th Street. A French Swiss, Fritz holds standards for the preparation of food every bit as rigorous as Wolfe's. They're well suited to each other, even if they occasionally get into an argument over the finer points of recipes. Fritz could easily get a job in any restaurant in New York City, but he prefers to remain with Wolfe (and Archie) and run the household; he not only is in charge of the food, but he often answers the door, takes messages, and oversees the day-to-day affairs of the house. Although he rarely takes an interest in the details of Wolfe's cases, he is perfectly reliable when called on to block the exit or hold a gun on someone Wolfe or Archie wants detained.

Colin Fox, who plays Fritz on A&E's *NERO WOLFE*, is a tall, distinguished, white-haired, and bearded veteran of theater, television, and feature films. His theater work includes plays at the Stratford, Ontario, Shakespeare Festival, the Shaw Festival, Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre, and on Broadway. He has appeared on dozens of TV series and in TV movies, most notably as Dr. Hendricks in *PSI FACTOR* (1996). His feature films include *BEAUTIFUL DREAMERS* (1990), *VOICES FROM A LOCKED ROOM* (1995), and *DAYLIGHT* (1996). Fox has also recorded audio books, and his children's CD, *TCHAIKOVSKY DISCOVERS AMERICA*, received a 1994 Juno Award in the Classical Children's category. He has also hosted a classical music radio show on 96 FM in Toronto.

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reflect closely the descriptions given by Stout, so that fans see Wolfe's oversized globe, the portrait of Shakespeare on the wall, the secret peephole into his office, Fritz's immaculate kitchen, the one-way glass in the front door (added after *THE GOLDEN SPIDERS*), and the front room adjoining the office. Wolfe's immense yellow pajamas (yellow is his favorite color) are almost a set in themselves.

"We respect the material," Jaffe declares. "We're only going to use author-written materials. Although there have been a few situations where new scenes and dialogue had to be created, they are kept to a minimum. As much as possible, we're entirely loyal to the book. We can do that because there are 73 stories, so at least we'll get four or five years of Stout material on the air."

Faithful scripts are not the only reason why A&E's *NERO WOLFE* is a rarity on television and succeeds where other adaptations have failed. It's set in a period rarely seen



Puttin' on the Fritz

COLIN FOX

interview by Paula Vitaris

Colin Fox: I grew up in Canada, in Toronto. My high school didn't have a drama club in my day. I wound up emceeing band concerts, doing some stand-up comedy—that got the spark going. Then I went to some night classes for drama, and after that I auditioned for the National Theater School of Canada. I got in, got through that and did a lot of stage, including the Stratford Shakespearean festival and the Shaw Festival. Then I came to New York and worked there for a while. I've been back and forth to New York for quite some time. I moved to New York in 1983 and I was there until 1990. Then I came back to Canada to be in a series called *PSI FACTOR*, which features stories of the paranormal.

Scarlet Street: It's something of a cult series, isn't it?

CF: It's syndicated in 22 countries around the world. I was a regular for four years, playing Dr. Hendricks, a psychiatrist, which was fun. After that, I was fortunate to get a nice part in *DAYLIGHT*, with Sylvester Stallone. I was the guy with the dog. That was a great shoot, because it took us five and a half months in Rome. Right after *DAYLIGHT*, I started to get more and more into television and film work, although I have done TV and film for the last 25 years.

SS: *Leading up to NERO WOLFE.*

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on the tube—the 1950s—and it presents a very stylized, non-naturalistic world that takes us back to the era of the classic Hollywood film. It's part hard-boiled detective story, part screwball comedy (much like the books themselves). The actors whip Stout's wry dialogue back and forth with panache and a percussive rhythm (often echoed in the big-band-style score by Michael Small), with pauses held for maximum effect. The women wear vivid colors, eye-catching hats, and elaborate hairdos, and the men sport big ties, double-breasted suits, and fedoras, courtesy of the show's costume designer, Chris Hardagon.

"If you read the books, they're all about style," Jaffe says. "Wolfe talks in a way that no human being on the face of the earth has ever spoken, with the possible exception of Rex Stout after he had a gin and tonic. The people are arch, categorical. Very rarely is a character gray. He's either black or white, and the few gray characters are basically straight men. They're the kind of people to whom Wolfe says, 'You're a weak-kneed, silly, ridiculous person and if you're

not careful, you're going to go to jail. Now leave me alone, I have to eat.' Why throw that out? That's why people read the books. That's the very best stuff. You read the book and you get a sense, a tone, a world view, a feeling. We want to match that tone. So, as much as we can, we have people speaking, walking, and talking in a very rhythmic, stylized way. We'll leave scenes in the middle with a wipe, and just come back into another scene. We do jump cuts and all sorts of weird stuff. It's a convention which the audience consciously or subconsciously buys into, and which allows us to make the kind of film we want to make."

Although Wolfe and Archie barely age throughout the life of the novels, each story taking place in the year Stout wrote it. Jaffe settled upon the fifties. "By and large, you can't pick up one book and identify it as belonging to any other time period but the one it was written in," he observes. "If you've read the whole body of work, you can sense Stout's increasing fluidity with his characters and his dialogue and his storytelling ability. His characters got more complex, his dialogue flowed much more naturally. The characters became better defined. I could, without knowing the title, read a book and probably tell you what decade it's from, if I didn't otherwise know. Since Stout spanned four decades, I just arbitrarily picked the early fifties, because I thought there was so much style that people

could identify with and that we could play off. For DEATH OF A DOXY, Tim decided to play it in the early sixties. If you look at that episode, it's really fun, because everything—the wardrobe, the art direction—is different, since it's a different generation. It breaks our mold. Ultimately, the most important thing is that the audience remain removed from the show by three or four decades. You can't do what Paramount did [for the 1981 NBC series] and update it and make the language modern. The whole thing doesn't make sense, because the tonal idiom doesn't play in the modern world. You have to separate it; you have to create that proscenium arch; you have to create poetic distance—otherwise there's no art to it."

Michael Small's score, varying from big-band era bounciness to quiet moments for the more emotional scenes, is a vital element in creating the stylized tone of NERO WOLFE. "You look at Michael Small's credits and that answers how we chose him," says Jaffe, who greatly admired Small's work for such films as KLUTE (1971), THE PARALLAX VIEW (1974), and THE STEPFORD WIVES (1975), and AUDREY ROSE (1977). "We met and I told him that this is an entertainment, that we're not doing a drama. I don't need any sturm und drang, and I don't need dra-

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Femmes Fatales

KARI MATCHETT

interview by Paula Vitaris

Kari Matchett is living her "dream job" as a member of the NERO WOLFE repertory company, playing nearly a half dozen characters in the show's first season, including the recurring role of wealthy heiress Lily Rowan, the one steady female relationship in Archie Goodwin's personal life.

A native of Canada, Matchett attended the National Theatre School of

Canada, studied at the Moscow Art Theatre School, and worked in theater, including productions of Shakespeare and other classic repertoire at the Stratford Festival, the Magnus Theater, the Piggery Theater, and the Centaur Farm Theater. She has also been active in TV, both in guest roles (VIPER, POLTERGEIST, PSI FACTOR, FOREVER KNIGHT) and as a regular on EARTH FINAL CONFLICT

and THE REZ. She has been nominated twice for a Gemini Award, for her performance as Maureen in the telefilm A COLDER KIND OF DEATH (2001) and her regular role as Colleen Blessed in POWER PLAY, and won a Gemini for her guest appearance on BLUE MURDER. Her feature films include APARTMENT HUNTING (2000), ANGEL EYES (2001), and MEN WITH BROOMS (2002). She can be seen in the upcoming films COMPANY MAN and HYPERCUBE, a sequel to the cult sci-fi favorite CUBE.

Matchett returned to NERO WOLFE in the second season's first episode, playing two roles: Lily Rowan and free-spirited singer Julie Jaquette, one of the most beloved female characters in all of NERO WOLFE. She will be seen throughout the rest of the season, donning a wide variety of personas. Here she is, as herself . . .

Kari Matchett: How did I get into acting? Well, I had a favorite book called *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton, written when she was a teenager. I was mad about this book! I read it about a dozen times. When I was in the midst of my mania about it, I read a *Teen Beat* magazine and they were talking about a movie version. Something clicked and I thought, "Well, that's what I have to do." I felt so much about these characters and the thought of being able to crawl inside their skins and being able to portray that—so I announced to my family that I would be an actress. I was 12!

Scarlet Street: Had you done any acting as a child?

KM: I had done a little, stuff in church and school. I remember my music teacher saying, "You should really think about doing this for a living."

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Scarlet Street's Murder by Radio Presents The Adventures of Ellery Queen The First Season by Francis M. Nevins and Martin Grams, Jr.

In 1939, while Fred Dannay and Manny Lee (creators of the fictional detective Ellery Queen) were arguing with each other in their \$45-a-month office over their latest mystery, a young executive in the program department of the Columbia Broadcasting System was toying with the concept of a new kind of radio drama. George Zachary had been associated until then with such CBS musical variety series as 99 MEN AND A GIRL, which featured the Raymond Paige orchestra and "the incomparable Hildegarde." What he really wanted was to produce and direct an hour-long detective series which would invite listeners to match wits with the principal character and—if they were very smart and very lucky—beat him to the solution of the week's mystery. To make this concept a reality was George Zachary's dream, but first he needed a writer who'd be at home with such a program and capable of turning out a 60-minute script each week. No one of that description was then working in dramatic radio. In 1939, the medium was still in its adolescence, and mystery programs on the air were few and far between. The spooky anthology LIGHTS OUT! was doing well, as were the cop show GANGBUSTERS, the newshawk series BIG TOWN, and, of course, the weird weekly exploits of THE SHADOW, portrayed in 1937-38 by a young genius named Orson Welles. Except for an occasional cycle of adventures of Sherlock Holmes, who was first heard over the airwaves in 1930, radio had no genuine detective programs at all.

If we are to believe the anonymous article in the March 1940 issue of *Radio Varieties*, Zachary spent night after night sitting up until the early hours of the morning, reading mystery author after mystery author, looking for the one perfect writer who could turn out a complete detective story every week. "Yet make it puzzling enough to intrigue the radio audience. Yet fair enough so that they could solve it if they marshaled all the facts correctly."

The clear implication of this article is that Zachary knew next to nothing about the detective fiction of his time, and didn't have the sense to seek advice from fans of the genre. According to *Radio Varieties*, it was only "after reading some 200 odd stories" that he "stumbled upon the first of the mysteries connected with Ellery Queen." This tidbit smacks more of publicity hype than of truth, but in any event, once Zachary had read a few Queen novels and realized that their "Challenge to the Reader" device was the exact literary equivalent of his own plan—to enlist the radio audience as detectives—he got in touch with Dannay and Lee and made them an offer. What he proposed was that Ellery Queen should become the star of his own weekly series on CBS.



The men who were Ellery Queen—Manfred B. Lee and Frederic Dannay.

At first, the cousins were reluctant. They knew nothing about radio writing and were being offered a starting salary of \$25 a week to learn the ropes. Then—and most of this reconstruction is informed guesswork—they must have thought long and hard about their economic situation and their literary goals. Between them they had a wife, an ex-wife, and four children to support, and their most recent novel, *The Dragon's Teeth* (1939), had been the first in years that hadn't been bought by a major national magazine prior to hardcover publication. Twenty-five dollars was only 10 less than they'd received for the first Ellery Queen short story six years before, and currently the short adventures of their character were appearing in such slicks as *Blue Book*, which paid top prices—but the audience for a successful radio program could be counted in the millions, astronomically larger than the readership of the most profitable Queen novels. And the cousins had already proved their own and Ellery's ability to change with the times and the needs of different media when they'd converted him from the Philo Vance clone of the early books to the slick magazine and Hollywood sleuth of Period Two. So why not invest some time and energy and give this new form of storytelling a try?

First, of course, they had to learn the fundamentals of writing for radio. This they did by turning out a number of scripts, without credit and at minimal pay, for two existing crime series. One of these was ALIAS JIMMY VALENTINE (1937-39), a radio program produced by soap-opera specialists Frank and Anne Hummert and very remotely based on the O. Henry short story "A Retrieved Reformation," which had earlier spawned a popular song, a stage play, and three silent movies. Bert Lytell starred as a reformed safecracker who helped the police by not quite legal means. In his introduction to *Cops and Robbers* (1948), a collection of O. Henry's crime stories that he had edited, Dannay claimed that he and Lee wrote "weekly scripts" for this series. The only episode they are known to have written is the one broadcast November 21, 1938. ALIAS JIMMY VALENTINE has long been forgotten, but the other series on which the cousins honed their radio-writing skills was that audio immortal THE SHADOW. Unfortunately, how much they enhanced the saga of that mysterious character with the power to cloud men's minds will probably never be known for sure. When I asked Fred Dannay, he couldn't remember any episode titles he and Manny Lee had written, nor even whether The Shadow was then being played by Orson Welles or his successor, Bill Johnstone. It now seems clear that they made their contributions during the first of Johnstone's five seasons as the character.



A little more than two months before the Ellery Queen series debuted, Dannay and Lee became involved in another radio venture that, to the end of his life, Fred Dannay believed to be one of the most fascinating experiments in the medium's history. AUTHOR! AUTHOR! was an impromptu melange of game and panel show which the cousins created and sold to the Mutual network. It debuted on April 7,

1939, under the sponsorship of the B. F. Goodrich Rubber Company and with Robert Lewis Shayon as director. The moderator for the series was humorist S. J. Perelman, although light-verse wizard Ogden Nash took Perelman's place one week. Dannay and Lee, billed respectively as "Mr. Ellery" and "Mr. Queen," served as permanent panelists, and the guests each week were media figures such as Dorothy Parker, Heywood Broun, Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman, Mark and Carl Van Doren, Fannie Hurst, Erskine Caldwell, and Quentin Reynolds. The format of the program was described by the announcer as "a fiction funfest." Each week's show began with a dramatized version of some inexplicable event. Here's an example, employed on the first program (which has survived on tape) and summarized by Dannay exactly 40 years later for David Behrens of *Newsday*:

A young man arrives for the reading of his uncle's will. The only heir, he is desperately in need of money to cover gambling debts. The will offers a choice: accept \$10,000 in cash or the contents of an envelope. He opens the envelope, which is empty, with no stamps or writing on it. "I will take the envelope," he says. At this curtain line the sketch would end and the moderator would challenge each of the week's four panelists—Dannay, Lee, and two guests who varied from program to program—to devise on the spot a set of circumstances that would make sense of the scene. Dannay's explanation for his own example was as follows:

The young man could not wait for his uncle to die. He killed him instead. The murder was committed with a slow-working poison placed on an envelope in his uncle's

study. But the uncle realizes his nephew's evil deed and scrawls a revision in his will, to create a malicious dilemma. His nephew has to choose between \$10,000 in cash or the chance to recover the only evidence of the murder—the uncle's final revenge.

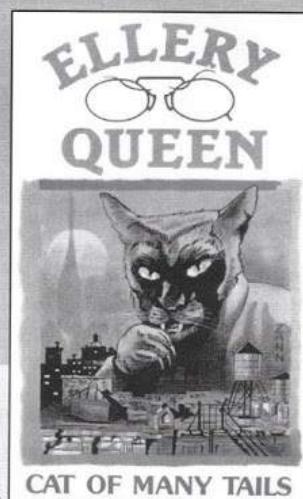
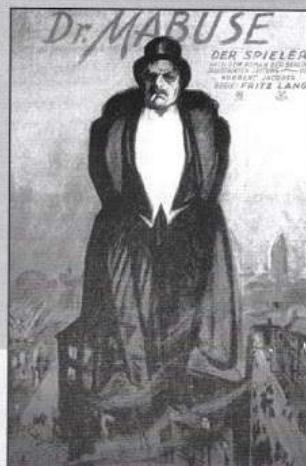
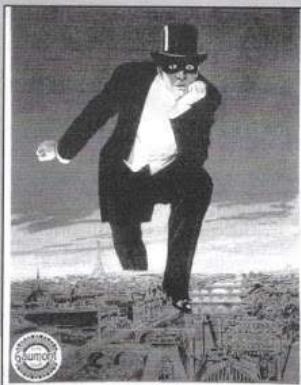
After each panelist had offered an ad-lib rationale for the situation, everyone would proceed to attack the others' constructions and defend his or her own. At the end of the first broadcast, the announcer invited listeners to send in their own impossible story situations, with B. F. Goodrich promising \$25 for each one used on the air. The panel members seemed to have a marvelous time heckling each other, but the whole concept presupposed an absurdly mechanical approach to storytelling and offered little to the millions of listeners who had no desire to hear writers match wits. Surprisingly, AUTHOR! AUTHOR! survived for almost a year before vanishing into the ether.

During that program's first weeks on Mutual, George Zachary over at CBS was lining up the actors and support troops who would bring THE ADVENTURES OF ELLERY QUEEN to audible life. For the crucial role of Ellery, he picked suave and slender Hugh Marlowe, who had played the dumb rich boy in Victor Schertzinger's Broadway musical comedy KISS THE BOYS GOODBYE (1940). Inspector Richard Queen was portrayed by radio veteran Santos Ortega, the doughty Sergeant Velie by utility actor Howard Smith, and medical examiner Doc Prouty by Robert Strauss. In order to provide the love interest that was supposed to attract the female audience, Dannay and Lee and Zachary added a new member to the Queen radio family: Ellery's pert secretary, Nikki Porter. Her role went to lovely Marian Shockley, who had been a 1932 Wampus baby star in Hollywood and had debuted on Broadway with George M. Cohan in DEAR OLD DARLING (1936). She and Zachary were married in October 1939, and Zachary made sure that Nikki was written out of the scripts during the weeks the newlyweds were off on their honeymoon. The first announcer for the series was Ken Roberts. During its initial 10 weeks on the air, the orchestra that performed the background music was conducted by Bernard Herrmann, who accompanied Orson Welles to Hollywood a year later, wrote the score for CITIZEN KANE (1941), and went on to compose the music for such Alfred Hitchcock masterpieces as VERTIGO (1958) and PSYCHO (1960).

Zachary's analogue to the Queen "Challenge to the Reader" device was to stop each week's drama at a certain

TOP LEFT: Ellery Queen as originally envisioned by Lee and Dannay was something of a snobbish prig. **LEFT:** Mystery writer Ellery Queen (William Gargan) and his secretary, Nikki Porter (Margaret Lindsay), in one of the Queen films produced by Columbia Pictures in the early forties—*A DESPERATE CHANCE FOR ELLERY QUEEN* (1942). Radio's Ellery Queen (Hugh Marlowe) is well known to sci-fi fans for the Earthy performances in *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (1951) and *EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS* (1956, pictured).





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Zachary must have been one of New York's busiest men that summer of 1939. Not only was he producing and directing a 60-minute drama each week, but whenever a Queen script ran short he and his assistant, Charles Jackson, who was to become famous a few years later for his novel *The Lost Weekend* (1944), had to insert additional dialogue as needed. On top of all these chores, Zachary functioned as story editor, taking special care to make sure that the Queen plot premises were sound. The series' first episode, "The Adventure of the Gum-Chewing Millionaire," hinged on a scorecard from a baseball game supposedly played that very Sunday afternoon, June 18, 1939, between the Washington Senators and the St. Louis Cardinals. A few hours before airtime, Zachary made a routine check and discovered to his horror that the game had been canceled because of rain. A frantic phone call to Washington satisfied him that the clue was still viable: several thousand fans had gone to the stadium before the game was called. The next week's episode, "The Adventure of the Last Man Club," dealt with a favorite theme in the Queen novels and short stories, red-green color-blindness, and Zachary made it his business to find out whether someone with this handicap could tell the difference between crème de menthe and a cherry liqueur. For "The Adventure of the Bad Boy," he had to research whether arsenic would kill a rabbit. So it went as week followed week and a new kind of radio drama was born.

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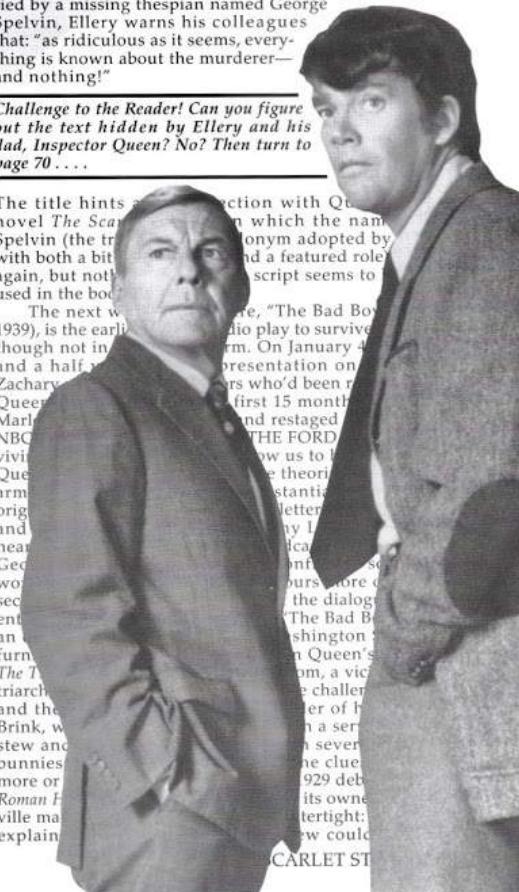
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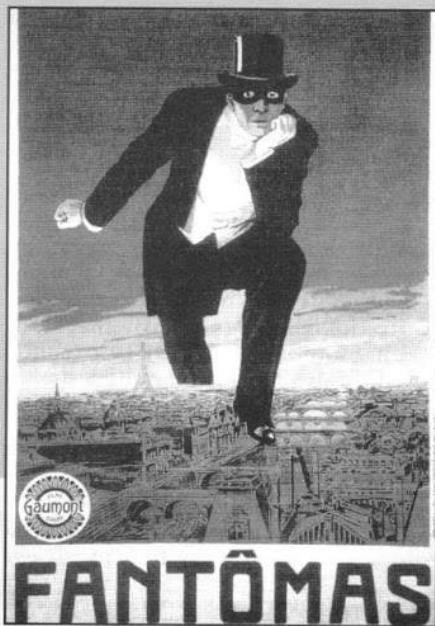
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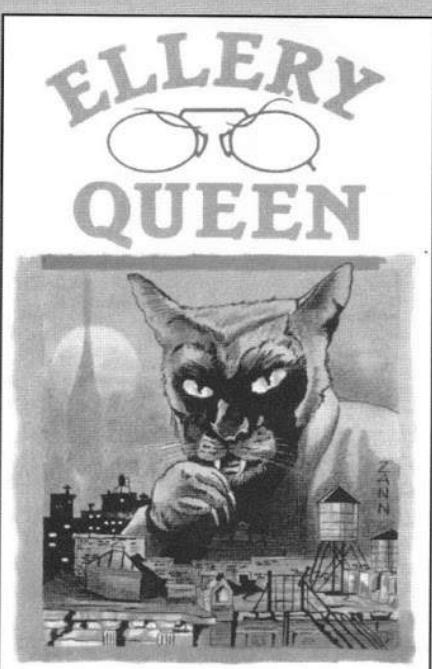
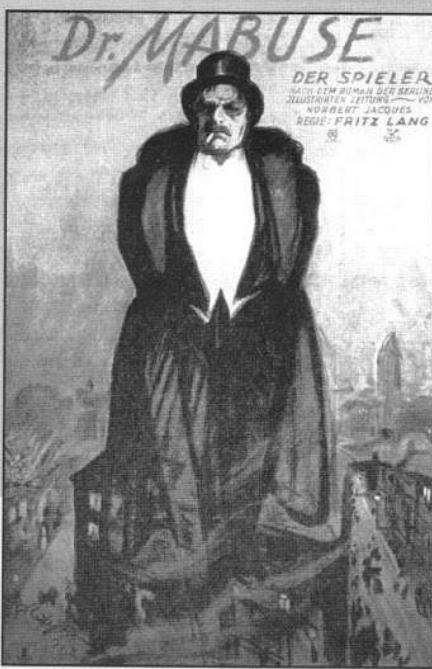


FANTÔMAS

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Variations on a villainous theme—the famous 1913 Gino Starace illustration of the arch-fiend Fantômas towering over Paris (TOP LEFT), a 1922 poster heralding the criminal ascendancy of Dr. MABUSE, DER SPIELER in Berlin (TOP CENTER), and Nicky Zann's 1988 cover art for a paperback edition of Ellery Queen's *Cat of Many Tails* (1949), the Cat in this case being a serial killer who terrorizes New York City (TOP RIGHT). PAGE 41: David Wayne and Jim Hutton played Inspector Richard Queen and his inquisitive son Ellery on television's ELLERY QUEEN in the seventies.



CAT OF MANY TAILS

Ellery Queen at his very best.

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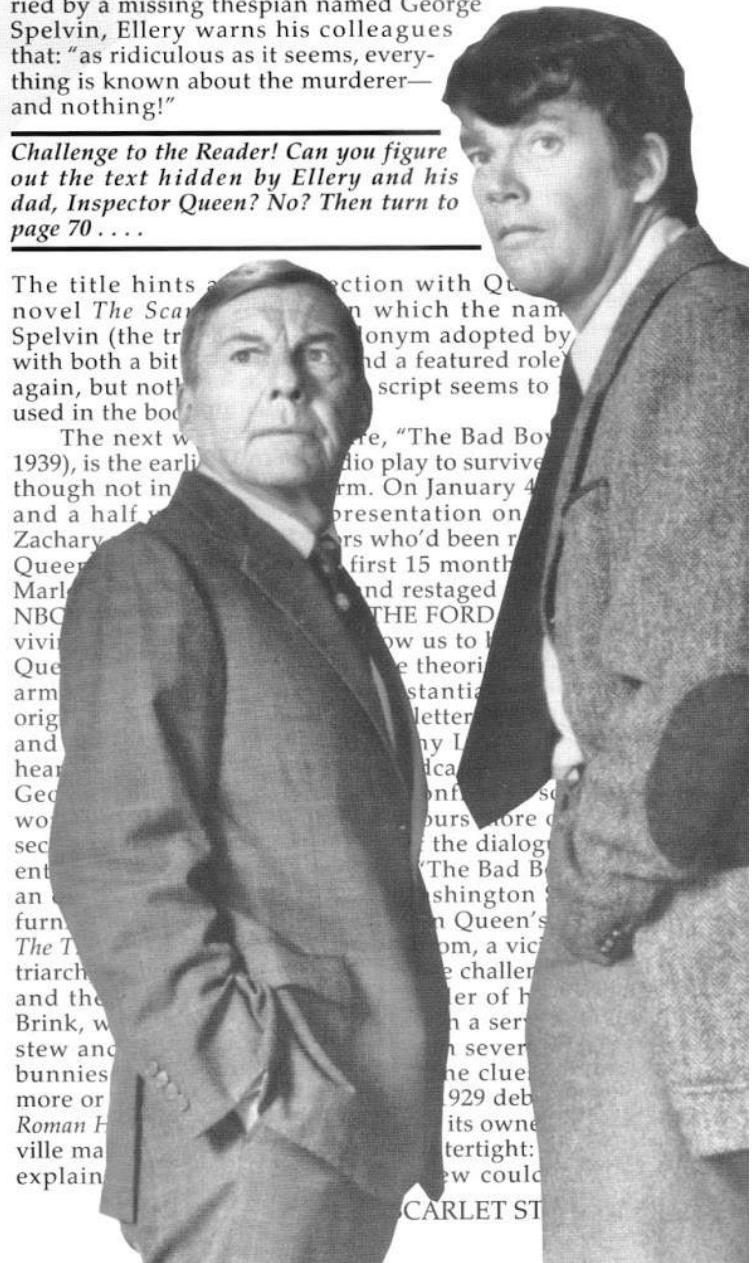
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CARLET ST

THE TOWERS OF FU MANCHU

An examination of the five film adventures of Sax Rohmer's insidious Dr. Fu Manchu starring Christopher Lee and produced by Harry Alan Towers

**by Troy Howarth
and Richard Valley**

"He was to be rather tall and rather gaunt, with a tremendous cranial development as befits a genius. So I began to build him up. Then I thought he ought to have some sort of defect, so I made him have a kind of film over the eyes, as with a bird. It was a new one on medical science and still is, but there it was. He was to be a great linguist—a man who knew every civilized language and many dialects. He was to be absolutely impersonal, not criminal according to his own way of thinking, for he was true to his consuming desire to revolutionize civilization. He was to be the embodiment of the idea that the East has been gaining knowledge while we have been building machines, the supreme master mind hovering on the border of madness, as so great a genius would."

—Sax Rohmer

Arthur Henry Sarsfield Ward, known in literary circles—but not too elevated literary circles—as Sax Rohmer, wrote the above for *The Daily Sketch* in 1934, in anticipation of the serialization of the latest literary exploits of the Devil Doctor. *The Trail of Fu Manchu* debuted on June 25, 1934 and ran through July 6. The serial and subsequent novel were aptly titled, since virtually every Fu Manchu story concerns the efforts of Sir Denis Nayland Smith and various handsome heroes to track down the evil genius and thwart his latest attempt at world conquest.

THE FACE OF FU MANCHU (1965), the first of five films produced by Harry Alan Towers and starring Christopher Lee as Fu Manchu, remains faithful to Rohmer tradition, if not precisely to any particular event as depicted in the books. Having avoided execution by substituting a mesmerized actor to take his place (a plot device possibly lifted from Pierre Souvestre and Marcel Allain's first *Fantômas* novel in 1911), Fu follows his usual pattern of kidnapping those individuals who will best help him bring his latest scheme to fruition, and acquiring their invariably lovely daughters to use as leverage.

When we left off in true cliffhanger fashion last issue, lovely daughter Maria Muller (Karin Dor) had just been abducted by Fu Manchu's own daughter, Lin Tang (Tsai Chin), as a means of coercing the captive Professor Hans Muller (Walter Rilla) into concocting a deadly poisonous gas from the seeds of the Black Hill Poppy. (Rilla is perhaps best known as Professor Pohland in 1962's THE TESTAMENT OF DR. MABUSE, 1963's DR. MABUSE VS. SCOTLAND YARD, and 1964's THE DEATH RAY OF DR. MABUSE.) Recklessly rushing to her rescue, Karl Janssen



(Joachim Fuchsberger) is himself kidnapped by one of Fu Manchu's henchmen, Gustav Hanumon (Peter Mosbacher). Lin Tang arrives at her father's lair just as a foolish female dacoit (Deborah DeLacey), for reasons left entirely unexplained, tries to help Professor Muller escape. She's caught in the act and the stage is set for a delicious spot of torture, Manchu-style.

In Towers' Fu Manchu series, Fu's daughter gets scant opportunity to satisfy the sadistic nature she displays in 1932's THE MASK OF FU MANCHU, in which she (Myrna Loy) merrily whips the hapless hero (Charles Starrett) into submission. She comes close, though, when she asks, "A favor, father. I've never liked the girl. Will you leave her to me—please?"

Alas, Lin Tang's doting daddy has other plans for the traitor. He explains—rather pleasantly—to his guests:

"The door you see before you leads to a small chamber. Twenty feet above our head is the River Thames. The first of these two levers controls the flow of water with which the chamber can be flooded, the second opens the chamber to the Thames above—the Way to Paradise."

This is a reasonable—if watered down—example of the torture devices found in Rohmer's stories, particularly the early ones. *The Return of Fu-Manchu* (1916), for instance, features the Six Gates of Joyful Wisdom, a cage divided into six sections. Like the unhappy subject of a magician's trick, a victim is placed in the cage, but he isn't sawed in half. He isn't so lucky. Introduced through the first gate at his feet (the Gate of Joyous Hope) are a pack of starving rats. As each gate is lifted, the hungry rats move higher and higher up the victim's body. According to Fu Manchu, no one ever quite makes it to the last gate (the Gate Celestial), "whereby a man enters into the Joy of Complete Understanding."

The girl handily drowned and disposed of in the Thames above, we return to the plot and the news that Professor Muller cannot complete his experiment without consulting some documents deposited at the British Museum by the Young Husband Expedition. (Whether the expedition was led by two chaps named Young and Husband or



The Yellow Peril plots again to take over the world, but he can't even afford enough material to make decent wedding gowns for *THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU* (1966). Christopher Lee is, of course, the insidious Dr. Fu; his lovely wives are not the Goldwyn Girls.

consisted entirely of desperate youths trying to avoid their wives is left unexplained.)

The museum scene begins the best sustained sequence in *THE FACE OF FU MANCHU*, filled with red herrings, disguises, fights, car chases, and devastating destruction—in other words, the world of Sax Rohmer brought vividly to life on the screen. Heroes and villains all converge on the museum, with Petrie dogging the tracks of a group of Asian students (the red herrings), Lin Tang crashing the party as a deaf old lady in a wheelchair (the disguise), and a fight (the fight) breaking out in an underground vault, where it turns out that the vital papers have been taken home by absent-minded Professor Gaskell (Harry Brogan). (As the museum director, guest star James Robertson Justice gets the film's best, albeit politically incorrect, line, when he yells after the departing Smith: "Wait a minute! You can't leave the museum littered with dead Chinese!")

With the law hot on her heels, Lin Tang bolts the wheelchair and joins her father in a getaway car. Smith and the others give chase (the car chase), successfully dodging various obstacles strewn in their path (including bombs dropped by Hanuman from a biplane), but losing their quarry when Fu directs his vehicle into a waiting van. (There's an amusing shot when the car makes a sudden turn and the impassive villain leans to the side, looking like one of the lovebirds in Melanie Daniel's speeding car in 1963's *THE BIRDS*.) Then the race is on to Professor Gaskell's home, with the Devil Doctor arriving first, procuring the documents, and placing Gaskell under his hypnotic spell. Soon, a voice is heard over the airwaves:

"This is Fu Manchu. Stand by for an important message. I repeat—this is Fu Manchu. In a few days' time, I shall speak again to this country and through it to the en-

tire world. What I tell you to do then must be done immediately. Anyone who disobeys will perish. To show you this is no idle threat, I give you this warning. Remember Fleetwick. I repeat—remember Fleetwick. That is all."

That's enough. With his means of murder perfected, Fu Manchu destroys the entire population of Fleetwick—3,000 people, including the armed forces sent to protect the town's citizens. The streets and buildings are littered with the bodies of innocents cut down while performing their daily activities. The scene is reminiscent of both *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* (1960), in which an otherworldly force puts the entire village of Midwich to sleep and impregnates the women, and *GOLDFINGER* (1964), in which the entire population of Fort Knox is presumably killed by poison gas. Midwich awakens and Fort Knox survives, but not Fleetwick, and the scene retains an eerie, tragic power all its own. (Comic characters don't fare especially well in the film. Two soldiers literally die on their feet as the plane carrying Universal Death swoops over Fleetwood, and poor Professor Gaskell, having outlived his usefulness, is hypnotically compelled to take a dagger and stab himself in the heart.)

THE FACE OF FU MANCHU doesn't exactly rush to its climax following the Fleetwick scenes. In fact, the film loses some of its narrative drive and meanders a bit. It remains only for Smith and Janssen, disguised in monk's habits, to infiltrate Fu's hideout in the tunnels under the Thames and rescue Maria, for Fu and Lin Tang to make their escape with the captive Professor Muller, and for Smith and Janssen, again disguised in monk's habits, to infiltrate Fu's new hideout in a Tibetan lamasery, rescue Muller, and blow the baddies up with a box containing explosives instead of the poisonous Black Hill Poppy. As

smoke billows skyward from the lamasery ruins, we hear the cold, impassive voice of the Yellow Peril: "The world shall hear from me again."

"He's back, that beloved arch screen-fiend of our childhood, back in full regalia and ritual and ready to rule the world... the world take-over he is having a couple of captive scientists cook up in his subterranean fortress-cum-lab under the River Thames is enough to curdle the blood and stir the old nostalgia. Stir it? Froth it, rather, for Peter Welbeck's screenplay is succulent with all the Sax Rohmerisms that ripen with age, and Don Sharp's direction drains full juice from scene after scene of cornball deduction, super-sleuthing, and oriental chicanery... it's a delight, albeit a simple-minded and sentimental one...."

—Judith Crist, *The New York Herald Tribune*
(November 11, 1965)

THE FACE OF FU MANCHU was enough of a hit to warrant continuing the series. Contrary to the opinions of some critics—including star Christopher Lee—the immediate sequel, THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU (1966), justifies that decision. The budget is smaller, it isn't quite as elaborate (no biplanes dropping bombs), and it suffers from confining its star to several interior sets (indeed, entirely too much of the film takes places indoors), but Don Sharp is again on hand to direct a "Peter Welbeck" (Harry Alan Towers) screenplay, the story is classic "criminal mastermind with a death ray" stuff, and its finale easily blows the lid off the previous film's rather suspense-free scenes in the Tibetan lamasery.

Having had little success with the abduction of a single scientist's beautiful daughter in FACE, the Devil Doctor ups the ante in the followup, the titular brides being 12 luscious lovelies whose families' cooperation is essential if Fu is to take over the world.

"THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU was started purely as a publicity stunt," Christopher Lee recalled in Robert W. Pohle Jr. and Douglas C. Hart's *The Films of Christopher Lee* (Scarecrow, 1983). "The idea was that I would travel about Europe and there would be a campaign in each of these countries to find not an actress, but someone who would represent that country as one of the brides."

Lee has less to do in BRIDES than in FACE, though for much of the time he seems to be having more fun doing it. (Having become a Swiss citizen—the better to avoid England's crippling taxes—Lee was granted only a few days filming in England, where the picture was entirely shot.) Taking over as Nayland Smith was Douglas Wilmer, an actor born for the role: he had recently finished playing Sax Rohmer's inspiration for Smith—Sherlock Holmes—in 12 hour-long TV episodes for the BBC. Less edgy and intense than predecessor Nigel Green (to whom edginess came naturally), Wilmer is nevertheless a splendid Smith, perfectly teamed with the returning Howard Marion-Crawford (television's Dr. Watson in the fifties) as Dr. Petrie.

"I'm sorry," says a puzzled Dr. Petrie in one of BRIDES' opening scenes, "but it seems that all this has happened before. It's uncanny."

"What do you mean, Petrie?" asks Nayland Smith.

"He's a research chemist. A young German. Just like last time."

Not only does THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU feature shanghaied scientists and daughters, but the hero is again a (not nearly as young as the script would have him) German, the result of producer Towers, as always, seeking international financing for his projects. The German in this case is Franz Baumer (Heinz Drache, sporting spiked hair several decades before it became fashionable), the

woman he hopes to save is Marie Lentz (Marie Versini), and the scientist is Otto Lentz (Joseph Furst). There's a twist, though—with the aid of Nayland Smith, Baumer disguises himself as Lentz and is kidnapped in his place, the better to lead Smith and Petrie to Fu Manchu's latest hidden lair in the Temple of Karna.

Not so fortunate as Lentz is industrialist Jules Merlin (Rupert Davies, destined to oppose Christopher Lee again in 1968's DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE), whose hypnotized daughter, Michel (Carole Gray), is completely under the thrall of Lin Tang. (There's the slightest hint of lesbianism in Lin Tang's half-smile when Michel, at her command, turns away from Merlin.) Merlin's kidnapping opens the story (following a short recap of THE FACE OF FU MANCHU's explosive conclusion, which shows a fraction more footage after Fu realizes that the lamasery is doomed), and it is through his expository scenes that we learn the chilling details of the Yellow Peril's latest brainstorm—in this case, turning soundwaves into energy.

"This is fantastic!" marvels Merlin. "Wonderful! Heat, light, power—transmitted anywhere in a matter of seconds! What do you use it for?"

Fu Manchu smiles. "Bombs and shells create such a small release of energy."

"But this power..."

"Is enough to destroy a city."

However, this time it isn't a Fleetwick decimated by the Devil Doctor, but Windsor Castle—or rather, the Windsor Castle. Taking a leaf from Alfred Hitchcock's THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH (1956), in which the man Ambrose Chappell turns out to be the place Ambrose Chapel, Towers (as screenwriter Peter Welbeck) has Smith and Scotland Yard evacuate Windsor Castle when Fu Manchu sends a warning that he has targeted it for destruction. As in Rohmer's novels, Fu has played fair and been a man of his word, and in this case the word is "the;" his warning clearly states that he intends to destroy the Windsor Castle—which turns out to be a cruise ship with passengers and crew totalling 123. He does so, the vessel being instantly vaporized by the death ray. (Hey, it's cheaper than having to blow up a model ship.)

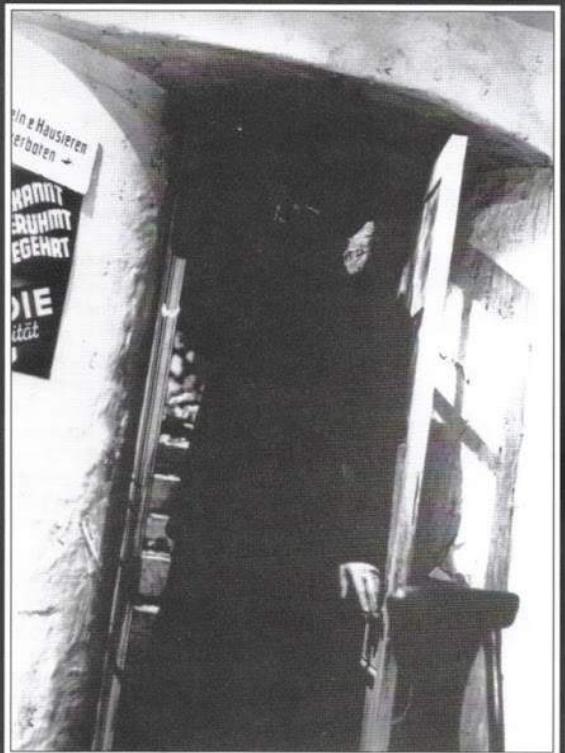
Having destroyed a ship, Fu Manchu targets an arms conference being held in London and zeroes in on an opening service to be held at St. Paul's Cathedral. Smith forces Merlin to help locate and disable the transmitter and receiver of the diabolical death-dealing device, then travels to North Africa, meeting up with the escaped Baumer on the way and enlisting the aid of French soldiers to storm the temple. Meanwhile, back in London, Petrie and the real Otto Lentz turn to England's supreme power—the BBC—to foil Fu's soundwaves. The Devil Doctor's second-in-command, Feno (Burt Kwouk, Kato in the Pink Panther films), is wary of Fu's zeal. So is Lin Tang, but the villain reassures his daughter that there's no danger of overload.

"What if the staff in the powerhouse makes a mistake?" worries Lin Tang. "Generate more energy than we need?"

"That is impossible since Feno installed his safety lock. When this lever reaches the bottom of the groove we are at safety maximum. It is necessary to take the lever and move it down into the second groove before the auxiliary channels will feed in."

Foolish Fu! Clearly, he has never seen BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935) or else he'd know that to install a lever in your laboratory is to risk being blown to atoms—which is precisely what happens when the BBC jams this signal and Fu calls for more power. Feno refuses, Fu Manchu shoots him, and the dying scientist falls—on the lever. Smith, Baumer, the brides, and the

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They seek him here
They seek him there
Those Frenchies seek him everywhere
Is he in Heaven
Or is he in Hell?
That damned elusive Pimpernel

—THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL

Like The Scarlet Pimpernel, or perhaps Harry Lime, that charming, sophisticated rogue at the center of his most famous radio series, the name of Harry Alan Towers resonates with more than half a century of perplexing mysteries, dual identities, cryptic contradictions, and startling surprises.

Darting in and out of the shadows, slipping from continent to continent, Towers—the rules-bending, bare-budget producer who returns time and again to the works of Agatha Christie, Sax Rohmer, H. Rider Haggard, and Oscar Wilde—maneuvers his way through a global shadow world that casually mixes the grander virtues of Victorian literature with the baser values of 20th-century screen exploitation.

Here, in the conclusion of his interview with *Scarlet Street's* Terry Pace, Harry Alan Towers discusses projects past, present, and future . . .

Scarlet Street: After all this time, you've decided to revive Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu and Sumuru for at least one film each.

Harry Alan Towers: We're doing the Sumuru film first, with a German model named Alexandra Kamp in the title role. This time we're doing SUMURU as

a science-fiction fantasy, where Sumuru is a strange, gorgeous princess who rules a planet occupied entirely by women. When two men arrive in a spaceship, she falls in love with one of them. When that happens, her whole life is changed. We'll do that one first, as a two-hour movie.

SS: It sounds like the plot of *SHE*, doesn't it?

HT: You're quite right! It does have certain similarities with *SHE*. Certain stories fascinate me and I enjoy returning to them. They've stood the test of time.

SS: Your first Sumuru film, *THE MILLION EYES OF SUMURU* in 1967, starred Shirley Eaton, George Nader, and Frankie Avalon.

HT: The director, Lindsay Shonteff, hated it! Hated it! He wanted us to promote it as the worst film ever made, so that the whole thing would look intentional! (Laughs) I declined to do so.

SS: What are your plans for Fu Manchu in the new film? Will you be keeping him on his home planet?

HT: Oh, yes! (Laughs) We'll move on to THE FIENDISH TRAP OF FU MANCHU later in the year—which will be the return of the world's most notorious villain. So far we haven't cast the role of Fu Manchu. We've considered Antonio Banderas. After seeing SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE, I think Willem Dafoe might be quite wonderful.

SS: Many critics and film scholars think it would be impossible to film a Fu Manchu movie nowadays, that it would prove insulting to the Chinese.

HT: I think it will be interesting to see how audiences respond to a new Fu

Manchu film. We'll be shooting in England, Spain, and Thailand, and, of course, there will be some differences with this new version. Times have changed, and we are living in an era of heightened racial sensitivity and what's referred to as political correctness. But you must remember, of course, that Fu Manchu does not have to be Chinese. The character could be pretending to be Chinese.

SS: Fu Manchu doesn't have to be Chinese?

HT: Well, Sax Rohmer certainly intended him to be Chinese. I'm not so sure what we are going to do with the character. We've got a new script which we're doing. We're considering several actors other than Willem Dafoe and Antonio Banderas. We're negotiating with Gary Oldham,

The Elusive Harry Alan Towers

Last issue, we fearlessly tracked down and cornered the rarely interviewed producer Harry Alan Towers, who began his career producing a radio version of *THE THIRD MAN* and is still hardly at work over 50 years later. Here's Part Two of *Scarlet Street's* exclusive . . .

Interview by Terry Pace



ABOVE: As elusive as producer Harry Alan Towers, who brought his adventures to radio, Harry Lime (Orson Welles) hides in a doorway in Vienna in *THE THIRD MAN* (1949). **RIGHT:** The peripatetic Mr. Towers caught in a rare moment of immobility.

too, for instance. I'm thinking that we're going to leave it that Fu Manchu was Chinese, but a figure of fantasy.

SS: Your first Fu Manchu film back in 1965 was filmed in Ireland.

HT: Ireland stood in for the England of the 1920s. It even stood in for Tibet! (Laughs) Kilmainham jail was used for the Tibetan temple at the end of the picture, but the Irish weren't happy about that because there was a movement to turn it into a shrine commemorating the Easter Rebellion of 1916. Many Irish were executed there by the British. We had permission to shoot, but some protestors arrived and insisted that we stop at once. By mistake, a crew member had turned the cells of the condemned Irish patriots into a stable for mules.

SS: How was the matter resolved?

HT: In a local bar, after a few drinks and with a cash settlement intended to help turn the jail into an historic monument. Needless to say, we studiously avoided Ireland for the next Fu Manchu film! (Laughs)

SS: Jess Franco directed two of your previous Fu Manchu films and one Sumuru. Would you consider asking him back for the new productions?

HT: Franco and I haven't worked together since EUGENIE—THE STORY OF HER JOURNEY INTO PERVERSION in 1969. Sadly, much of Eugenie's journey was filmed out of focus and I decided it was time to move on.

SS: EUGENIE was based on the work of the Marquis de Sade and starred Chris Lee.

HT: He replaced George Sanders, who was not in good health, physically or emotionally. After we finished filming,

Lee called and expressed fear that he had performed in an erotic film! He wanted his name removed from the film—not the usual sort of billing demand. (Laughs)

SS: You've often returned to the same tried-and-true source material. For instance, you've produced three separate versions of Agatha Christie's TEN LITTLE INDIANS, along with two films of Stevenson's TREASURE ISLAND. Now you've remade Haggard's SHE, and you've finished a new DORIAN GRAY as well. Why do you keep reinterpreting the same familiar stories?

HT: We own the rights to many of these stories, so we revisit and reevaluate them now and then. If they're good stories, they deserve to be revived. Of course, if they're strong enough, you can do them a little differently each time you revive them. You tailor them to the marketplace. I thought the version of DORIAN GRAY we did with Helmut Berger was very well done, actually, but it's such a good story that you can always find ways to make it more contemporary.

SS: It was the first version to make the homosexuality in the story overt, and to feature extensive nudity.

HT: At the time, of course, you practically couldn't feature Helmut Berger in a story without having him take his clothes off. I'd used nudity earlier in my films, in THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU, but that was only for the continental version. The young girls all appeared bare-breasted, which wasn't allowed in the United States at that time.

SS: Having ended your collaborations with Jess Franco, you hired Massimo Dallamano to direct DORIAN GRAY.

HT: Through him, we procured Helmut Berger for the lead. Both Berger and Fred

Williams, who was Jonathan Harker in COUNT DRACULA, were protégés of Luchino Visconti.

SS: In the case of Helmut Berger, at least, the word "protégé" was a euphemism for lover. As with the 1970 version, set in the swinging London of the late sixties, the new DORIAN is updated to the present day.

HT: In this new version, the "picture" of Dorian Gray is not in fact a painting, but a photograph. Malcolm McDowell is playing Henry Wotton, the role that was played in the earlier version by Herbert Lom. Dorian is played by Ethan Erikson. This time the character is a contemporary photo model, a New York fashion model. Still, the essentials of Oscar Wilde are there.

SS: What other projects do you plan?

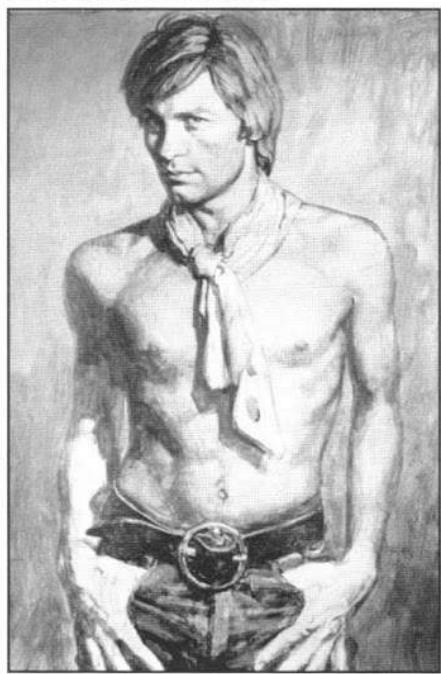
HT: I've put together films in 36 different countries, including Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Israel, Iran, Italy, Luxembourg, Morocco, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Turkey, the United States, Zimbabwe, and many others. But it's been extremely difficult getting projects off the ground lately, because nobody wants to travel.

SS: Since the terrorist attack last September, you mean?

HT: Yes, exactly. We just made a film with Richard Grieco, called DEATH, DECEIT AND DESTINY ABOARD THE ORIENT EXPRESS. I went to Bulgaria and found the train that belonged to the ex-king of Bohemia, and we put it out on the tracks again. We also made a new version of THE SEA WOLF,

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LEFT: Perhaps Harry Alan Towers should have called the film "The Hunky Picture of Dorian Gray" instead of simply DORIAN GRAY (1970). This rare behind-the-scenes shot proves that Helmut Berger is a dummy! Not really; he was smart enough to hook up with Luchino Visconti—but that's a dummy of the actor as the desiccated Dorian of the film's final scene





LEFT: The statuesque Fah Lo Suee poses provocatively on the cover of the 1962 Pyramid Books edition of Sax Rohmer's *The Mask of Fu Manchu*, written 30 years earlier. **RIGHT:** Disappointingly renamed Lin Tang, Fu Manchu's daughter (in the person of the diminutive Tsai Chin) figured prominently in all five of Harry Alan Towers' *Fu* films.

THE TOWERS OF FU MANCHU

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soldiers all escape. As smoke billows skyward from the temple ruins, we hear the cold, impassive voice of the Yellow Peril: "The world shall hear from me again."

THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU proved disappointing to those expecting an adaptation of Rohmer's *The Bride of Fu Manchu* (1933), with which it shares virtually no similarities. (For one thing, it's short almost a dozen brides.) Still, it's a worthwhile series entry, sporting the best finale of all five films. It's also the series' sole instance of Fu Manchu losing control of his icy emotions, which he does more than once in the novels. The cast, direction, and script are solid, and the lively background score is the work of Bruce Montgomery, famous to mystery fans as Edmund Crispin, the creator of Professor Gervase Fen. Not Fenno, but Fen

"Chinese are not inscrutable. One member of the Chinese crowd was always pushing himself forward to get into every shot. His colleagues got so angry they killed him. They chased him down the road toward Hong Kong and actually killed him. The film? Well, the film is not very important."

—Christopher Lee

THE VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU (1968) is unquestionably a comedown for both the series and its title fiend. It isn't nearly as good as FACE or BRIDES, owing in large part to the absence of Don Sharp as director (he was replaced by Jeremy Summers) and a substandard script by Towers (writing, as always, as Peter Welbeck). As for Fu, the Devil Doctor is less interested in world conquest this time out than in settling the score with Nayland Smith. Still, the film retains a certain pulp fiction panache, and it's better than its star would have one believe. Important it isn't, but neither is it an altogether unworthy addition to the series.

The manner in which the Yellow Peril exacts vengeance harkens back to the prologue of THE FACE OF FU MANCHU and such political thrillers as THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE (1962), the "Hundred Days of the Dragon" episode of TV's THE OUTER LIMITS (September

16, 1963), and Sax Rohmer's own novel *President Fu Manchu* (1936). The basic plot can even be found in BLACK DRAGONS (1942), one of the nine poverty row features made by Bela Lugosi for Monogram in the forties. In that opus, Lugosi, as a Nazi plastic surgeon, transforms Japanese spies into the spitting images of American industrialists. The replicas replace the real men and set about committing sabotage across the country. (If the stock footage is to be believed, their efforts include starting a riot at Rudolph Valentino's funeral in 1926.)

"Now my work can begin. A work of infinite pleasure. A work of vengeance—vengeance against one man!"

With those cold, cruel words, Fu Manchu, who has returned with Lin Tang to the family palace in China, sets about plotting the downfall of Nayland Smith. First, however, there's a little spring cleaning to take care of, and Lin Tang at last gets a chance to indulge her playful streak. Several transgressors must be punished and the Devil Doctor leaves it to his doting daughter, who proceeds to have one victim's neck broken, another victim beheaded, and a third placed under her hypnotic spell, the better to save him for further use.

Meanwhile, Nayland Smith (Douglas Wilmer, in his second and last appearance in the role) meets FBI agent Mark Weston (Noel Trevarthen) and other law officials in Paris, where they propose an international organization to be called INTERPOL. (*President Fu Manchu* has an American agent for its hero, too, though his surname is Hepburn.) Following the conference, Smith goes on holiday with Dr. Petrie (Howard Marion-Crawford) to Ireland. The doctor is detained and Smith is shanghaied—to Shanghai, in fact! Smith is replaced with Lin Tang's third victim, whose face has been transformed by Dr. Leiberson (Wolfgang Kieling) into an exact duplicate of Smith's. Dr. Leiberson is a masterful plastic surgeon. With a daughter (Suzanne Roquette).

It transpires that Fu Manchu's vengeance also boasts a minor bid for conquest, with the police chiefs of the world being replaced by doubles programmed to commit murder, after which they will be tried, disgraced, and executed. Though Fu succeeds as far as having the counterfeit Smith hanged for strangling his housekeeper, Jasmin

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THE RETURN OF THE HORROR KING

Christopher

Lee

interview by David Del Valle

In Part One of David Del Valle's 1984 interview with Christopher Lee, the star of *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* (2001) and *STAR WARS: ATTACK OF THE CLONES* (2002) reflected on past glories with Hammer Films and such friends and costars as Peter Cushing, Boris Karloff, Vincent Price, and John Carradine. Part Two concludes with more anecdotes and reminiscences, including Lee's work for producer Harry Alan Towers as the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu

Scarlet Street: Besides Count Dracula, you played a wide range of roles for Hammer, didn't you?

Christopher Lee: That's true. I played the romantic lead in *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, and I played a kind of vicious romantic in *THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL*. I also got to play a really nice doctor in *SCREAM OF FEAR*, with Susan Strasberg. That was very interesting; that was a very good movie. Directed by Seth Holt. One of the best pictures Hammer ever made.

SS: Still, you were perceived as typecast, so you said farewell to Hammer Films.

CL: I had long since fulfilled any obligations to Hammer. In fact, I fulfilled my obligations to Hammer after my first two pictures for them. One of their people said many, many years later, when I flatly refused to do another film, "You owe it to us." I said, "I owe you nothing! I did owe you something in 1957 and '58, but the debt has long since been paid. Since then, whenever I'm asked to do another Dracula picture everyone starts crying and moaning and wailing and saying we



PAGE 48: The film that made Christopher Lee (pictured with Melissa Stribling) a horror legend—HORROR OF DRACULA (1958). ABOVE: Lee studies a road map while costar Boris Karloff points to a possible escape from the set of THE CRIMSON CULT (1968).

can't afford you, and telling me to think of the people I'll put out of work if I don't do the film. I've had enough." And so I left.

SS: You mentioned your first trip to the United States . . .

CL: That was in 1957 or '58, I think, when I was shooting what was originally called THE DOCTOR FROM SEVEN DIALS and then came out as CORRIDORS OF BLOOD, a film with Boris. I had never been to America in my life, and I went to New York to promote the first Dracula film with Peter. I'll never forget walking into the office of the president of Universal Pictures—myself, James Carreras, Anthony Hines, Peter Cushing—and he got up from behind his desk and came forward and said a sentence I will never, ever forget. He said, "Gentlemen, do you realize that with this film, you will probably save our company from bankruptcy?" Now, I don't know on what he based that statement, but he did make it! I'd never heard a senior executive make a remark like that, ever!

SS: Your last Hammer Film was TO THE DEVIL—A DAUGHTER.

CL: Which was the first film Nastassja Kinski and I made together. We got on fine in that film, very well indeed. Of course, I was delighted to work with Richard Widmark, whom I'd always admired enormously. The film is extremely good until the last five minutes, when they ruined it, but otherwise it was a very good picture. It was lit by David Watkin, a great cameraman in England.

SS: You mentioned Dr. No, whom you never got to play. However, you did play an even more famous Asian villain in five fives—Dr. Fu Manchu.

CL: Quite honestly, the first one, THE FACE OF FU MANCHU, should have been the last. It is the best. As with the Dracula films, the first one is always the best. FACE made a lot of money and it was inevitable there were to be more.

SS: What do you recall about making THE FACE OF FU MANCHU?

CL: It was a very difficult picture to make. Here again, I was playing another classical villain. This was not the first time I played an Asian villain. I'd played one in a film for Hammer called THE TERROR OF THE TONGS, and I have to tell you, it was a very uncomfortable and difficult makeup. I actually spoke Chinese in that film, which oddly enough would come into service later on with the Fu Manchu films. I always admired the Hammer film. It was a fine-looking picture with a good supporting cast—although seeing British character actors like Charles Lloyd Pack made up to look Chinese could be hysterically funny to those in the acting community.

SS: The production values were quite good for THE FACE OF FU MANCHU.

CL: Indeed, they were. The film was made in Ireland and the director, Don Sharp, was first-rate. He worked for Hammer on occasion as well. The greatest compliment I got as Fu Manchu came from the creator's widow, Mrs. Sax Rohmer. She told me the story of how her

husband came to create the character in the first place. It seems when Rohmer was a young reporter he found himself in the Limehouse District of London looking for a story. He noticed a Rolls Royce pulling up to one of the shadier night spots and out of the car came an immensely tall Chinese and a gorgeous half-caste woman. Believe me, there are tall Chinese. Sax Rohmer let his imagination run wild with this image and he created this marvelous fictional Napoleon of Crime.

SS: Was it difficult playing a character of a different race without offending anyone?

CL: That's an honest question. I must tell you there were no objections in American cities like San Francisco, for example, that have a large Chinese population. Even in Hong Kong, where some people could find the character of Fu Manchu objectionable—especially when he is referred to as The Yellow Peril—there were, to my knowledge, no objections. I can only reiterate that I never played the character of Fu Manchu in any way that could be considered offensive. I always gave the character immense power and dignity. Of course, Fu Manchu had a spectacular brain. A remarkable intelligence. In fact, Mrs. Sax Rohmer said to me after she saw the film that her husband would have been delighted with the result. There's no better compliment than that.

SS: What were working conditions like while you were making THE FACE OF FU MANCHU for Harry Alan Towers?

CL: They were the worst imaginable! The weather was cold and icy. Most of the



LEFT: Friends and frequent costars Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee battled an alien creature while taking a ride on the *HORROR EXPRESS* (1972). **CENTER:** Lee had a rare opportunity to play a good guy in *THE MAN WHO COULD CHEAT DEATH* (1959), the icy Anton Diffring playing the titular bad guy. **RIGHT:** Lee (pictured with Yvonne Furneaux) out-shuffled Tom Tyler and Lon Chaney Jr. when he tackled the role of Kharis in *THE MUMMY* (1959). **BETWEEN:** Lee puts the bite on luscious Veronica Carlson in *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* (1968).

crew came down with the flu. We nearly lost one of the actors, Walter Rilla. We worked in a place called the Kilmainham Gaol, which is an historical site in the Irish Republic. There was much concern that we might offend the Irish people, so we were careful.

SS: Critical reaction to *THE FACE OF FU MANCHU* was very positive.

CL: It was a great success. The Americans called it "Chop Suey Bond." In New York, there was an election for mayor and the publicity department wasted no time in putting Fu Manchu's name forward. There were large Fu Manchu for Mayor posters all over New York! (Laughs) On Election Day, believe it or not, Fu got several write-in votes!

SS: The film ends with the famous phrase, "The world shall hear from me again!"

CL: Well, that was definitely a signal for the sequels to follow. As I said before, I wish we had only made the one. All of

the subsequent films—BRIDES, VENGEANCE, CASTLE, etc.—were made with decreasing production values, scripts, and budgets. The greatest sin of all was not to fully explore the colorful, rich material in *Sax Rohmer*. I said the same thing with Dracula and Bram Stoker. I knew every time I donned the oriental robes of Fu Manchu that it was going to be a disappointment, but this was my livelihood. And I always try to convince myself to fight for the best in each encounter.

SS: There were many interesting actors in the *Fu Manchu* films, but perhaps none more interesting than the young woman who played your daughter, Tsai Chin.

CL: Tsai Chin was a diminutive, charming, and very beautiful young woman. She was the daughter of a very well-known Chinese actor. In fact, her brother is none other than Mr. Chow, who owns the restaurants around the world. She was very helpful with my characterization. She helped me with Chinese expressions, and was very reassuring to the Chinese community regarding the possibility we might offend with my portrayal of Fu

Manchu. She has had a very interesting and somewhat tragic life, which I believe she has written about.

SS: Can you tell me anything about Harry Alan Towers, who produced the *Fu Manchu* films?

CL: I will tell you a little about him. Harry has a great talent for putting projects together all over the world. As you know, I have made several films for him, including a version of Dracula. He is a maverick in every sense of that word. He is a showman.

He has produced radio, television, and I believe was even a child actor. Harry is the man behind all of the *Fu Manchu* films. In the sixties, there was a resurgence of interest in *Fu Manchu* because of the Bond films. After we made *THE FACE OF FU*

MANCHU, there was even some banter that the two might meet. All of this was fantasy, of course, but one only needs to read Ian Fleming's *Doctor No* to get the point.

SS: You've had some troubles with *Towers*, haven't you?

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Continued on page 73



The Many Faces of Christopher Lee

Interviews from the pages of *Scarlet Street*
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SS: For instance?

CL: When I burst through the glass windows, they were real glass and not sugar. It just went straight through like needles. When I was shot, the explosions were detonated underneath the costume, of course. You have to remember that special effects in those days were very much in their infancy. If you were blown up, you were blown up—or very close to it! (Laughs)

Continued on page 52

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LEFT: Friends and frequent costars Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee battled an alien creature while taking a ride on the *HORROR EXPRESS* (1972). CENTER: Lee had a rare opportunity to play a good guy in *THE MAN WHO COULD CHEAT DEATH* (1959), the icy Anton Diffing playing the titular bad guy. RIGHT: Lee (pictured with Yvonne Furneaux) out-shuffled Tom Tyler and Lon Chaney Jr. when he tackled the role of Kharis in *THE MUMMY* (1959). BELOW: Lee puts the bite on luscious Veronica Carlson in *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* (1968).

crew came down with the flu. We nearly lost one of the actors, Walter Rilla. We worked in a place called the Kilmainham Gaol, which is an historical site in the Irish Republic. There was much concern that we might offend the Irish people, so we were careful.

SS: Critical reaction to *THE FACE OF FU MANCHU* was very positive.

CL: It was a great success. The Americans called it "Chop Suey Bond." In New York, there was an election for mayor and the publicity department wasted no time in putting Fu Manchu's name forward. There were large Fu Manchu for Mayor posters all over New York! (Laughs) On Election Day, believe it or not, Fu got several write-in votes!

SS: The film ends with the famous phrase, "The world shall hear from me again!"

CL: Well, that was definitely a signal for the sequels to follow. As I said before, I wish we had only made the one. All of

the subsequent films—*BRIDES*, *VENGEANCE*, *CASTLE*, etc.—were made with decreasing production values, scripts, and budgets. The greatest sin of all was not to fully explore the colorful, rich material in *Sax Rohmer*. I said the same thing with *Dracula* and *Bram Stoker*. I knew every time I donned the oriental robes of Fu Manchu that it was going to be a disappointment, but this was my livelihood. And I always try to convince myself to fight for the best in each encounter.

SS: There were many interesting actors in the *Fu Manchu* films, but perhaps none more interesting than the young woman who played your daughter, Tsai Chin.

CL: Tsai Chin was a diminutive, charming, and very beautiful young woman. She was the daughter of a very well-known Chinese actor. In fact, her brother is none other than Mr. Chow, who owns the restaurants around the world. She was very helpful with my characterization. She helped me with Chinese expressions, and was very reassuring to the Chinese community regarding the possibility we might offend with my portrayal of Fu

Manchu. She has had a very interesting and somewhat tragic life, which I believe she has written about.

SS: Can you tell me anything about Harry Alan Towers, who produced the *Fu Manchu* films?

CL: I will tell you a little about him. Harry has a great talent for putting projects together all over the world. As you know, I have made several films for him, including a version of *Dracula*. He is a maverick in every sense of that word. He is a showman. He has produced radio, television, and I believe was even a child actor. Harry is the man behind all of the *Fu Manchu* films. In the sixties, there was a resurgence of interest in *Fu Manchu* because of the *Bond* films. After we made *THE FACE OF FU*

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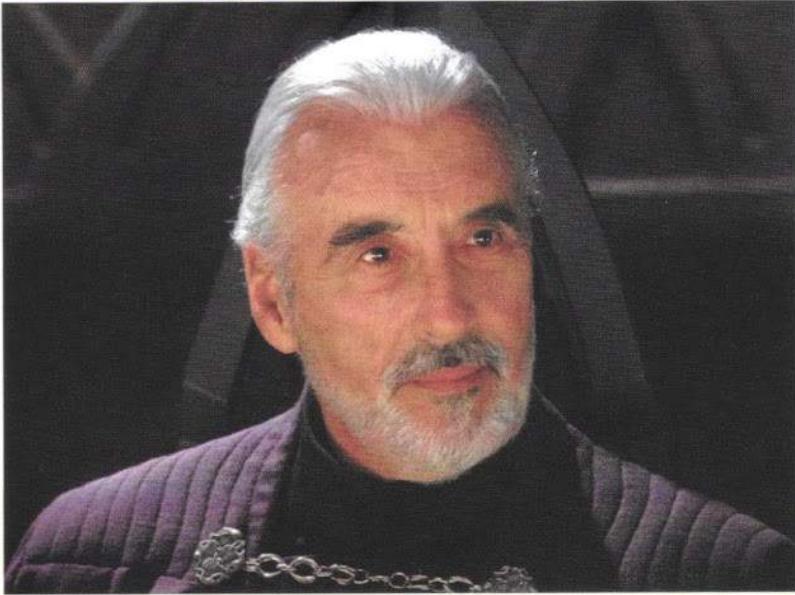
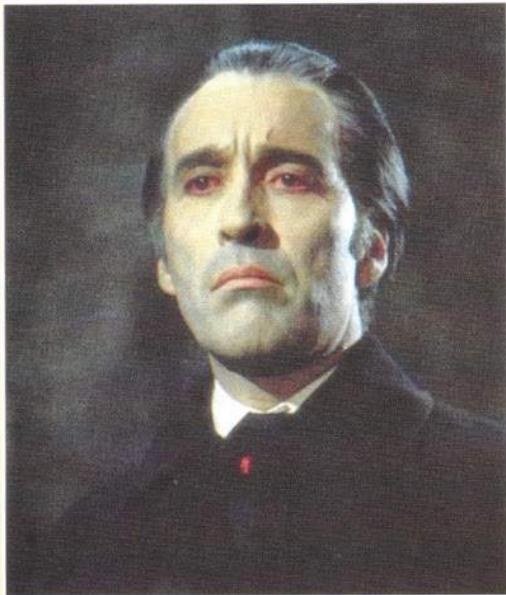
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Christopher Lee discusses his many famous roles—Frankenstein's Creature, Kharis the Mummy, and Dr. Fu Manchu—in the conclusion of this article taken from the star's past interviews in *Scarlet Street* . . .

Scarlet Street: Who was the makeup for Frankenstein's Creature designed?

Christopher Lee: Well, I did three tests, if I remember rightly, for the character. They were quite dreadful. I mean, one of them made me look like a combination between a wolf and a pig! Another was, surprisingly, quite close to the Elephant Man. Then we put our heads together and said, "Look, it's bits and pieces of other people, so it should be patched together." So there were lumps and scars and one dead eye and the stitch marks and everything, which was pretty unpleasant. Today, it would be considerably easier, because makeups have obviously improved, but it took about three to four hours every day. It didn't take very long to take it off—with Boris, it took about two hours—and I didn't have to wear the terribly heavy things he had to wear. The only disagreeable aspect was when I had to get into a tank, because the Creature comes out of the tank of chemicals and reveals himself to his creator. I had to lie in this tepid water, which gradually got colder and colder and colder. Then there was another occasion when I was shot in the eye. I don't know whether the chemical composition of blood has changed very much over the years, but in order to get that effect I had to put some makeup blood in the palm of my hand. Then, when I was shot, I covered my eye and took my hand away and you saw all the blood all over the place. And when this happened, I gave vent to an ear splitting shriek, which literally paralyzed everybody on the set. (Laughs) I don't think they'd ever



LEFT: No matter how many varied roles he plays, Christopher Lee knows that he's destined to be remembered as Count Dracula. This particular pose is from the much maligned SCARS OF DRACULA (1971). RIGHT: Peter Cushing appeared in the first STAR WARS in 1977. Lee follows in his friend's footsteps in STAR WARS: ATTACK OF THE CLONES (2002).

THE MANY FACES OF CHRISTOPHER LEE

Continued from page 51

It wasn't easy in any other respect, because I could only literally open my eyes. The makeup was completely rigid and restricting. When you are restricted from making physical effects with your face, it is much more difficult, obviously, and much more demanding. Film acting is basically done with your mind and with your eyes. If it doesn't show in your eyes, it doesn't convince anybody. But it did enable me, with movement and with the eyes, to create a character once the priest had become the mummy. I remember vividly two scenes in that film. One was coming up out of the mud. I had to get down underneath it and, at a given signal, like a tug on a string, come up. Also, I remember carrying the girl through the swamp. There was a tank in the studio, and underneath it was filled with machinery, with pipes and gadgets and things to create the bubbles and all the various special effects. Of course, I kept crashing into 'em and I nearly fractured my shins.

SS: Any more horror stories about making THE MUMMY?

CL: There was another occasion when I had to come through a door. Somebody had, I hope unthinkingly, bolted it. I hit it with my shoulder. I smashed straight through the door. The door was supposed to be a breakaway door, so when I hit it, boom! Yes, there were some pretty rugged moments on that film. And there were also some very, very funny ones, because my face was rigid, my mouth closed by the makeup. I'm standing there, freezing to death in the water, covered in mud and hating every minute, with the

most terrible language coming out from behind this rigid mask. We had a lot of laughs on that.

SS: In THE GORGON, you got to play the hero instead of the monster.

CL: Yes, I'm on the side of the angels in that. Sort of Einstein, really; a man of great and brilliant brain. Even the makeup—the moustache and the wig—was Einsteinian, if I could use such a phrase. Strangely enough, I played a lot of characters for Hammer Films who were not bad guys. In fact, after doing THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, the next part I played was the romantic lead in THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. I think THE GORGON worked. It looked absolutely wonderful, and the photography was superb. Peter Cushing was the one, actually, who played the unsympathetic character. And dear Barbara Shelley was a superb actress. She was in many Hammer films, including THE GORGON.

SS: The story was inspired, wasn't it, by the original Greek legend?

CL: Well, everybody knows the story of the Gorgon. Perseus succeeded in cutting off the head by looking at the reflection in his shield, so he didn't actually look at the Gorgon. In the film, I slay the Gorgon in much the same way—with a sword, a big cavalry saber. I look at her reflection in the mirror; I don't look directly into her eyes. The problem—I referred earlier to special effects being in their infancy—the problem was the snakes. Terrible! Today they do it with opticals, but in those days it was terribly difficult and there simply wasn't the budget to come up with a totally adequate nest of snakes.

SS: Was your makeup in TERROR OF THE TONGS difficult to achieve?

CL: It was the most difficult makeup of all, without doubt, and the most uncom-

fortable. You have to have a false eyelid to get what they call the epicanthic fold, but to get that effect you have to take molds of your eyelids and then put in a piece that goes underneath the eyebrow. I couldn't look down, or my own eyelids would appear underneath the false ones. And if I looked up, all you would see would be the whites of my eye. So the whole character had to be played in a very level way. Literally.

SS: You've really had your problems with makeup, haven't you?

CL: I remember doing a Fu Manchu film in Hong Kong. I was made up on the Hong Kong side in the Hilton Hotel, had to take the ferry over to the Kowloon side. I had this long, thin moustache. I covered my eyes with dark glasses in order that it shouldn't be too obvious, because the people on the ferries were all Chinese. I was getting a few strange looks, and eventually somebody came over to me and said, "Excuse me, sir, but may I ask a personal question? Are you an actor?" And I said, "Yes." he said, "Nobody wears a moustache like that except the very, very old." I said, "Well, I hope my playing a Chinese won't offend anybody." And he said, "Would you mind taking off your glasses?" So I took off my glasses and he was peering at me, and then his friends came and peered. And they said, "Yes, that's pretty good makeup." And then one of them said, "Excuse me, sir, but what is your Oriental background?" I said, "Well, I don't think there is one, actually, in my family." He said, "What is your name, sir?" I said Lee. That, I'm afraid, made the matter much more confused than it was meant to be! (Laughs)

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In the winter of 1972, a young filmmaker named Roger Watkins began work on what is commonly referred to as the most vile and disgusting film ever made. Under the pseudonym of Victor Janos, Watkins wrote, directed, produced, and starred in *The Last House on Dead End Street*.

Roger Watkins stars as Terry Hawkins, a down and out pornographer, fresh out of prison. Disgusted by the world around him, he begins work on a series of snuff films—targeting the very society that put him away. Lock your doors! Terry Hawkins is shooting his last masterpiece at *The Last House on Dead End Street*!

Long considered a lost film, Barrel Entertainment has spared no expense in bringing the ultimate special edition of this 1970s grindhouse classic to your house. To avoid fainting, keep repeating: "It's only a movie... Only a movie... Only a MOO-VAY!"

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- Full running audio commentary by director Roger Watkins and Deep Red editor Chas. Balun
- Over 20 minutes of rare outtakes, including the infamous Barb McGraw porn footage
- Five early, never before seen short films by Roger Watkins (over 70 minutes worth) with full running audio commentary by the director himself
- At Home with Terry Hawkins – Over 90 minutes of behind the scenes production phone calls detailing the making of *The Last House on Dead End Street*
- Original trailer
- 60 minute radio interview with director Roger Watkins and actor Ken Fisher (1973)
- Roger Watkins and actor Paul Jensen on *The Joe Franklin Show* (1975)
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Cover Girls, Guys, and Ghouls!

by Kevin G. Shinnick

The shadow that was the Spider crept on until it reached the fifth floor and there paused beside a window. Within the apartment, a girl sobbed, a strangled horrible sob that had nothing to do with tears.

The Spider peered in. The girl was on the floor. An amber robe trailed as she pulled herself on stiffened arms, legs dragging, across the floor. Her hair was amber, too. Its smooth flow hid her face. And her breath was sobbing. Upon the back of her amber robe was a sprawling pattern of crimson . . . of blood! The hilt of a knife formed the center of the pattern. It had been driven up to the guard in her back!

—Grant Stockbridge, *The Serpent of Destruction*

Weird, lurid, grammatically suspect, and not meant for polite company—that's the image of pulp fiction. Though this certainly holds true for many examples of the form, many pulp tales were crafted by writers of considerable talent, working at the top of their form. Isaac Asimov, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Erle Stanley Gardner, Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, H. P. Lovecraft, Cornell Woolrich, Robert Heinlein,

Sax Rohmer, Robert E. Howard, L. Ron Hubbard—even Tennessee Williams, whose first stories were published in *Weird Tales*—all wrote for the pulps.

Among the writers less famous today—Lester Dent (writing the Doc Savage stories as Kenneth Robeson), Dwight Babcock (the Smashing G-Men stories) Clark Ashton Smith, Walter Gibson (writing the Shadow stories as Maxwell Grant), Horace McCoy (author of the 1935 novel *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*), Johnson McCulley (the Zorro stories), Abraham Merritt, Phillip Francis Nowlan (the Buck Rogers stories), Norvell Page (the Spider stories), and Rafael Sabatini (the Captain Blood stories).

In its heyday, pulp fiction filled the newsstands, covering such diverse genres as mystery, horror, sci-fi, romance, fantasy, and adventure, and such wide-ranging topics as sports, speakeasies, high finance (after the 1929 Wall Street crash, these magazines quickly vanished), zeppelins ("The Gorilla of The Gas Bags," *Zeppelin Stories*, June 1929), and—naturally—sex. (The spicy men's magazines didn't so much fill the newsstands as appear from under the counter.) You name it, there was probably a pulp title that covered it, so the question is raised—why did they disap-

pear like the dinosaurs? Why did such a popular literary form dwindle from several thousand periodicals to only a mere handful in our present-day market?

To find the answer, we must journey back to when the pulps began, in the early 1800s. Books were expensive. The cost of binding, printing, paper, and shipping all added up, and only the very well-to-do could afford to own books.

Then, in 1837, a weekly series called *Brother Jonathan* was created. Publishers Rufus Griswold and Park Benjamin were aware that the post office subsidized newspaper distribution, and decided to distribute books in pamphlet form, printed on the same cheap paper used for the news. The pamphlets, or "pulps," were widely distributed and very successful. Soon, other publishers joined the race for readers, and the "dime novel" (or in England, the "penny dreadful") was born, the vast majority being published monthly rather than weekly. In England, they already had monthly periodicals, publishing such writers as Charles Dickens in serialized form. However, the dreadfuls were considerably more lurid—1847's *Varney The Vampire or Feast Of Blood* by Thomas Preskett Prest (though often attributed to James Malcolm Rymer) is a good example—and far less socially conscious than the works of Dickens.

In the States, the Civil War at first impacted on the sales of dime novels, but as the war dragged on, soldiers became hungry for inexpensive (and easily portable) reading material, and publishers were quite willing to fill the need. The rebels often carried cheap copies of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* (1862) in their gear (they felt it had great significance to their struggle), while the Union Army preferred such magazines as *The War Library* with their tales of Union bravery and battles fought and won. So hungry were the soldiers for new reading material that, prior to battle, each side would exchange book and magazines with the other.

Buffalo Bill Weekly, detective tales (Edgar Allan Poe had created the modern detective story with the 1841 publication of "Murders In The Rue Morgue" in *Gentleman's Magazine*) and fantasy (Jules Verne's *Five Weeks In A Balloon* in 1863) serial publications followed. The invention of the typewriter sped up the process, and soon hundreds of publications were available. In 1886, *Nick Carter, Detective*, made his debut, and stayed around in various forms up to the 1960s, his final incarnation being a spy-smashing variation on James Bond. In England, *Beeton's Christmas Annual* published Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), the world's introduction to Sherlock Holmes. The world was initially unimpressed and Conan Doyle received 25 pounds for his efforts.

The Golden Age of the Pulps truly began in October 1896 when publisher Frank A. Munsey changed the format of his long-running but poor-selling periodical *The Golden Argosy*, which had premiered in 1882. To cut costs, Munsey dispensed with photographs and illustrations (even dropping the word "Golden" from the title) and published fiction on the most inexpensive paper available.

The result was bland in the extreme, the yellow cover featuring only the title, the publishing information, and—brilliantly—the promise of 192 pages of pure fiction for only a dime. (His competitors were charging 15 cents or more.) The desperate measure worked, and sales climbing higher

and higher through the early 20th century, when the magazine's circulation hit 700,000.

In 1912, Munsey introduced *Cavalier*, the first weekly pulp. Seven years earlier, in 1905, *Argosy* had once again begun to feature cover paintings, the better to compete against such newcomers as Street & Smith's *Popular*, which had debuted in 1903. Artists N. C. Wyeth (father of Andrew), Frank R. Paul, Virgil Finlay, Hannes Bok, Norman Saunders, and V. E. Pyles created fantastic worlds of adventure, romance, and fantasy in black-and-white sketches and full-color paintings, many of which were tossed in the trash can when pulps' heyday had passed.

In the 20th Century, the pulps began to specialize. Where once an individual publication would contain a variety of styles and subjects, the new pulps each had a particular niche, as evidenced by such titles as *Sea Stories*, *Jungle Stories*, *Western Story Magazine*, *Sport Story Magazine*, *Women's Stories*, *Thrilling Adventures*, *College Stories*, *Indian Stories*, *Pirate Stories*, *Gangster Stories*, *Gun Molls Magazine*, *Prison Stories*, (which, logically, one would read after reading *Gangster Stories* and *Gull Molls*), *Flight*, *Wings*, *War Stories*, and *Brief Stories* (which was not an early version of *International Male*). At least 1,200 titles came and went before the decline and fall of the pulps in the fifties.

Still, it's with mystery, horror, and sci fi/fantasy that fans most often associate pulp magazines. These genres included such legendary titles as *The Black Mask*, *Weird Tales*, *The Shadow Detective Monthly*, *Doc Savage Magazine*, *Nick Carter Magazine*, *The Spider* (the most successful of the *Shadow* imitations, lasting from 1933 through 1943), *Amazing Stories*, *Dime Detective Magazine*, *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* (still around after over 50 years), *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine* (also still around), and *Astounding Science Fiction*. (Astounding editors Harry Bates and John W. Campbell Jr. wrote 1940's "Farewell to the Master" and 1938's "Who Goes There?" respectively, the former becoming the 1951 film *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* and the latter 1951's *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD*.) Bogus Fu Manchus proliferated, including *The Mysterious Wu Fang* and *Dr. Yen Sin*. Surprisingly, though, the Devil Doctor himself never finagled a pulp all his own.

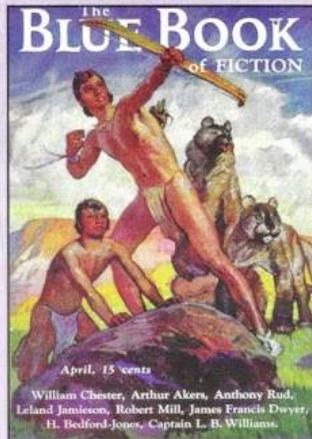


"Stamping up toward the building, Bill heard titters from windows. Girls in extreme dishabille were leaning out, gesturing to him . . . Earth, under her woman rulers, had taken all the joys out of life. Death for drinking, death for smoking, death for love outside the marital bond—which accounted for most of the bootleg love provided by the 'nectarines'."

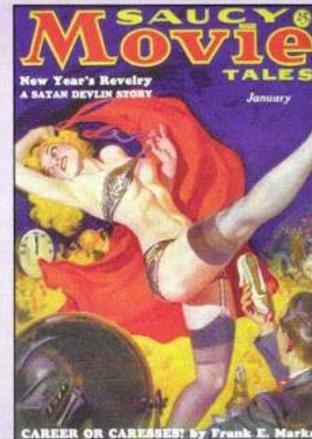
—Lew Merrill, *Spicy Adventure Stories*

Then there were the *Spicys*—*Spicy Western*, *Spicy Adventure*, *Spicy Mystery*, *Spicy Detective*, everything but *Spicy Meatball*! Written specifically for a heterosexual male audience, the *Spicys* were lavishly illustrated, predominantly with drawings of girls (never women) in various stages of danger and undress. Conan the Barbarian creator Robert E. Howard wrote for *Spicy* this-and-that under the name Sam Walser. Writer Hugh B. Cave had a more imaginative pseu-





William Chester, Arthur Akers, Anthony Rod, Leland Jamieson, Robert Mill, James Francis Dwyer, H. Bedford-Jones, Captain L. B. Williams.



LEFT: *Blue Book* featured less lurid, more family-oriented entertainment than most pulp magazines. This 1937 cover by Herbert Morton Stoops illustrates "Hawk of the Wilderness," the story of a white boy adopted by Native Americans and seemingly forced to shoot game minus the advantage of an arrow. CENTER: Ouch! Rudolph Zirn's piercing art adorned the Summer 1934 issue of *Mystery Novels Magazine*, which featured Simon Templar, The Saint. RIGHT: Artist Norman Saunders was especially titillating with this 1937 cover for *Saucy Movie Tales*.

donym: Justin Case. A silent partner in *Spicy* publishing was DC Comics, and a *Spicy Mystery* from February 1936 features a cover story by Lew Merrill entitled "Batman"—some three years and three months before the debut of the Caped Crusader in *Detective Comics*.

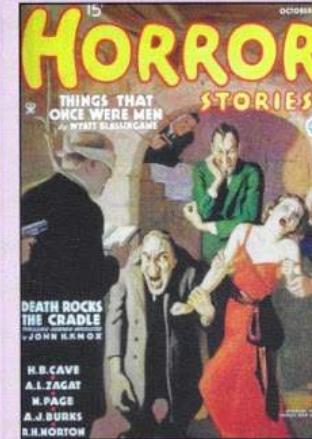
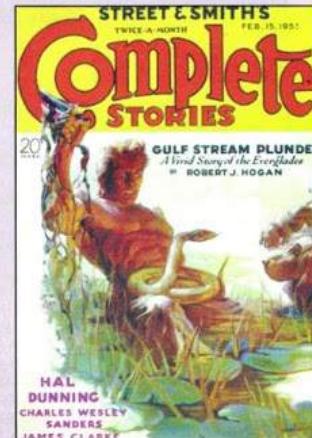
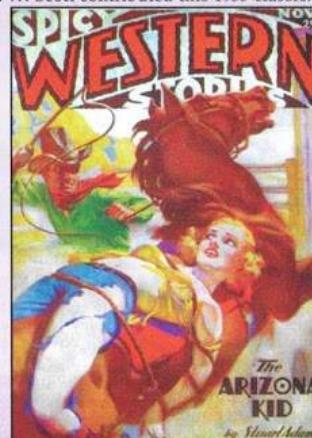
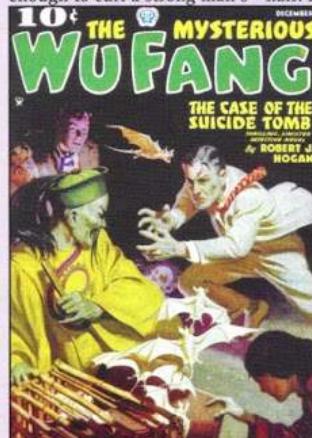
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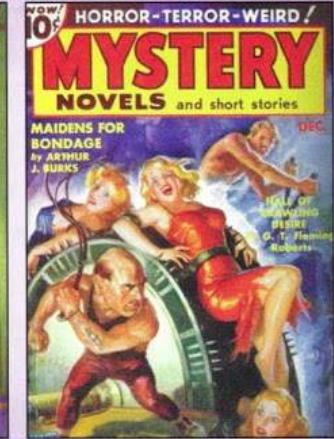
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H.B. CAVE
A.L. ZAGAT
M. PAGE
A.J. BURKS
L.H. NORTON



The CREEPING DEATH



MAIDENS FOR BONDAGE
by ARTHUR J. BURKS
HALF OF A MADNIS
G. T. Fleming Roberts

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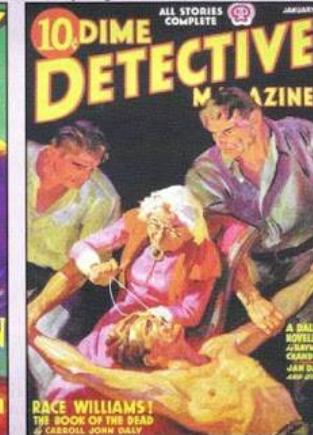
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Continued on page 68

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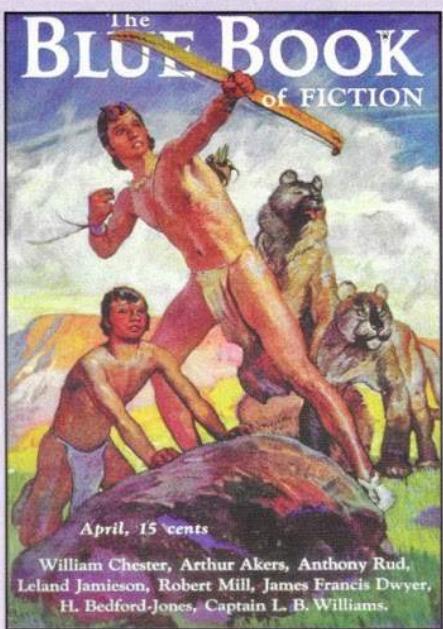
BATMAN
by Lew Merrill



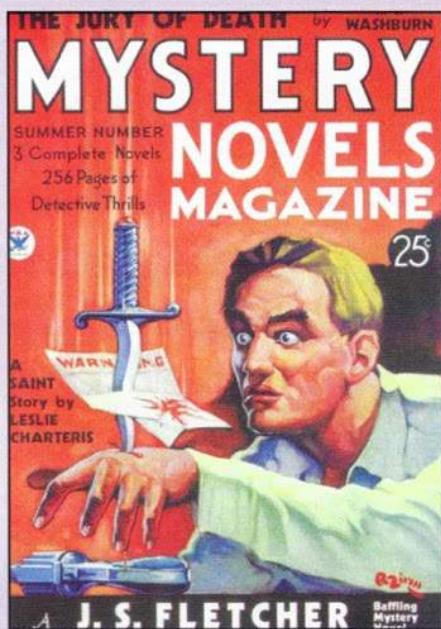
RACE WILLIAMS I
THE BOOK OF THE DEAD
by CARLOS JOHN DALY



CREEP, SHADOW!
Science fights the destroying power of a modern sorceress!
By A. MERRITT

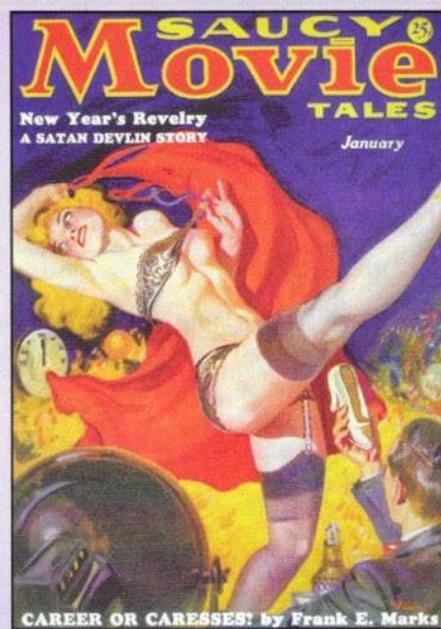


William Chester, Arthur Akers, Anthony Rud, Leland Jamieson, Robert Mill, James Francis Dwyer, H. Bedford-Jones, Captain L. B. Williams.



A SAINT Story by LESLIE CHATERIS

J. S. FLETCHER



CAREER OR CARESSES! by Frank E. Marks

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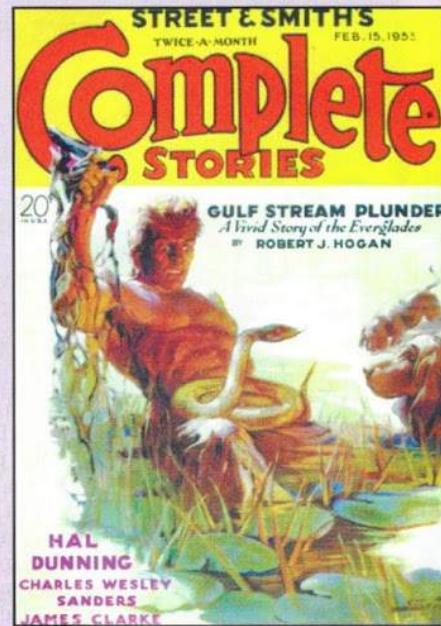
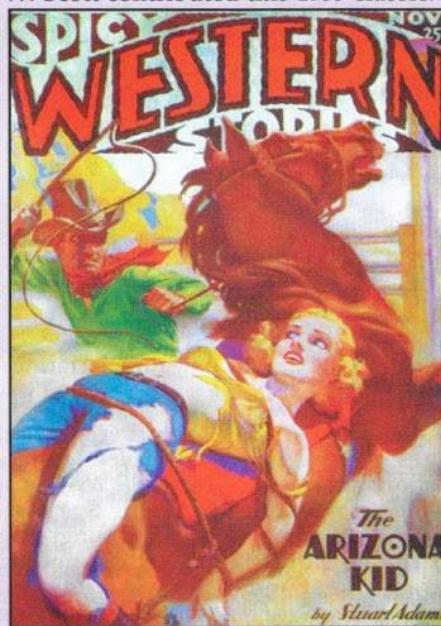
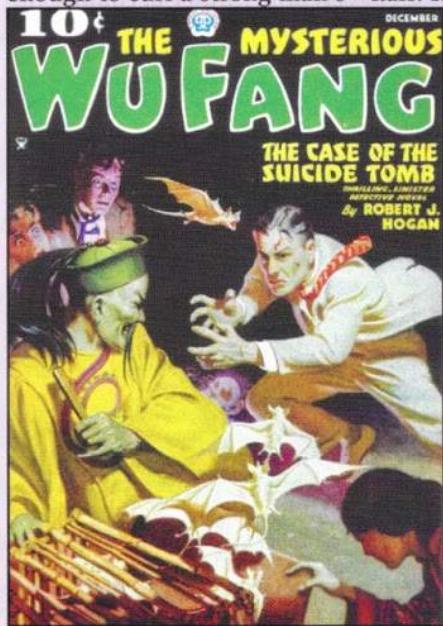
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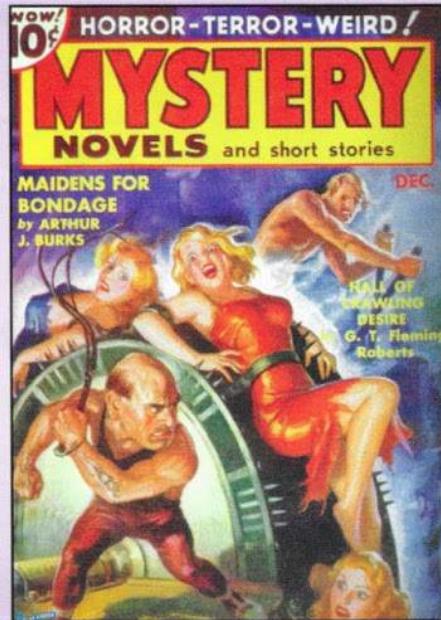
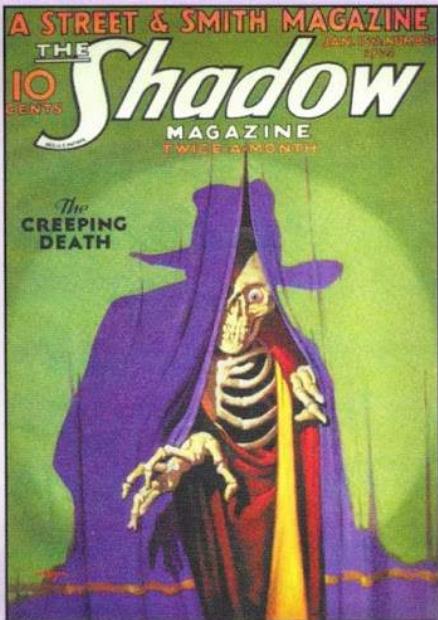
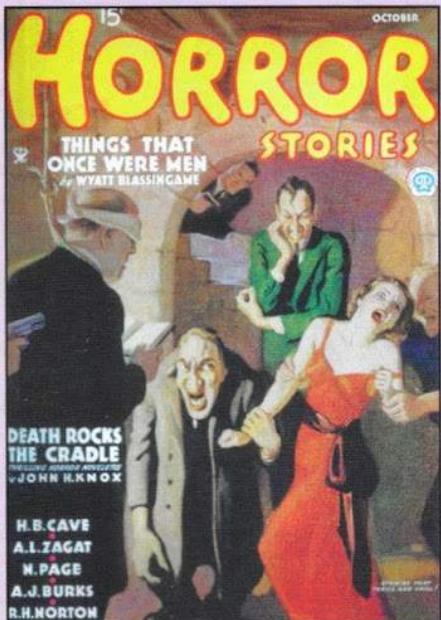
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his name with his 'small-town' covers for the Post. Walter M. Baumhofer was to gain his reputation with covers for western and adventure magazines; John Newton Howitt for the 'shudder pulps'; Frank R. Paul and Howard V. Brown for science-fiction publications; George Gross for sports magazines; Frederick Blakeslee and Frank Tinsley for air pulps; plus a host of other talented painters who became identified with particular genres . . . When pulps finally died in the early fifties, many cover artists drifted to the slicks or into the paperback field. Not surprisingly a number went into portrait painting and fine art. The pulps had contributed more than their share to America's golden

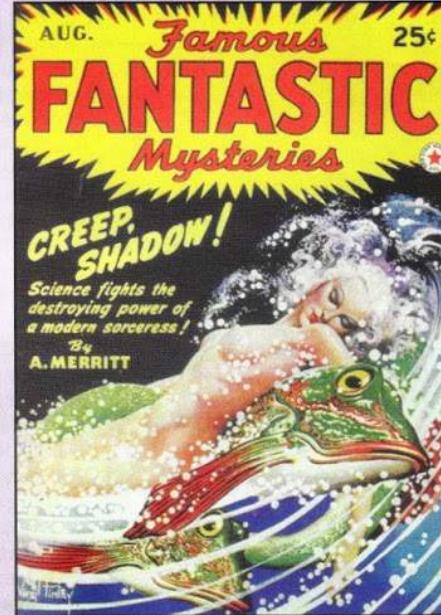
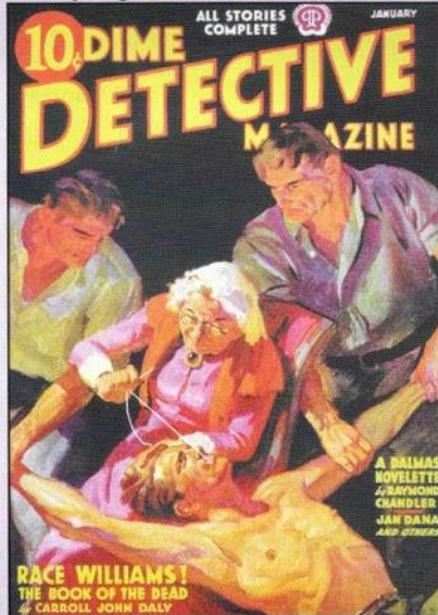
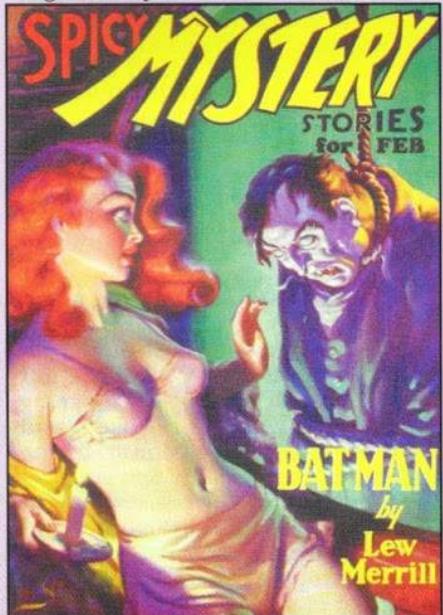
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All Singing! All Dancing! All Nudie!

Bruce Kimmel interviewed by Richard Valley

What can you say about a man who has produced some of the finest cabaret and original cast recordings in the past decade, sold original stories for such popular horror films as *THE FACULTY* (1998), played (in his youth) Laurie Partridge's boyfriend on the hit seventies sitcom *THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY*, and written, produced, and starred in the notorious—and notoriously funny—*THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL* (1976)?

Well, you can say plenty, but it's hardly necessary when Bruce Kimmel, celebrating the DVD release of *THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL* on its 26th anniversary, is available to say it for you . . .

"I had been acting professionally since 1970," remembers Kimmel, "but I'd had the idea for *NUDIE MUSICAL* prior to that, in 1969 when I was living in New York City trying to be an actor and not succeeding. I was working at a place that took surveys; I worked with the craziest batch of people, totally insane—in other words, actors. After work, we would walk down 8th Avenue and look at movie theaters showing what they called 'nudies.' Back in those days, there was no porno. I thought it was a funny idea to spoof them as a musical. I had gone to college with Cindy Williams, so when I got back to LA, I called her. She thought it was a hoot! The idea

was that we'd do it in 8mm with all our friends. We'd all wear masks and nobody would use their right name."

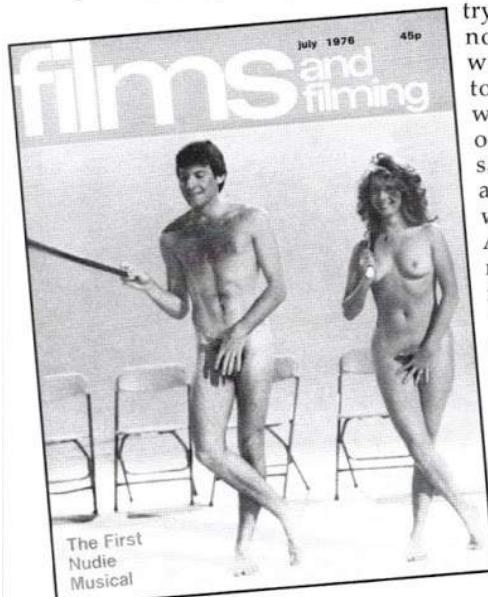
Instead, Kimmel's acting career suddenly took off, including a semiregular gig with Susan Dey, David Cassidy, Shirley Jones, and the rest of the Partridges. Still, Bruce and Cindy keep talking about the nudie musical idea, and at one point Cindy even asked Jack Nicholson if he'd like to be in it. What was Nicholson's reaction?

"He said 'No,' I guess, since he's not in it. Somewhere around 1973, we started talking about it seriously. Mark Haggard got involved as a codirector, and finally I just sat down and wrote it. Cindy was getting really popular, because she had done *AMERICAN GRAFFITI* that year, but we started auditioning it for people, backer's auditions in weird people's homes. Jack Reeves had done a movie with Mark called *BLACK EYE*, starring Fred Williamson, and he became our producer. He found 10 people who'd each put up \$15,000, and we'd make the movie for \$150,000. We offered the lead to Henry Winkler, because Cindy was dating him, but he didn't think it would be good for his career at that time."

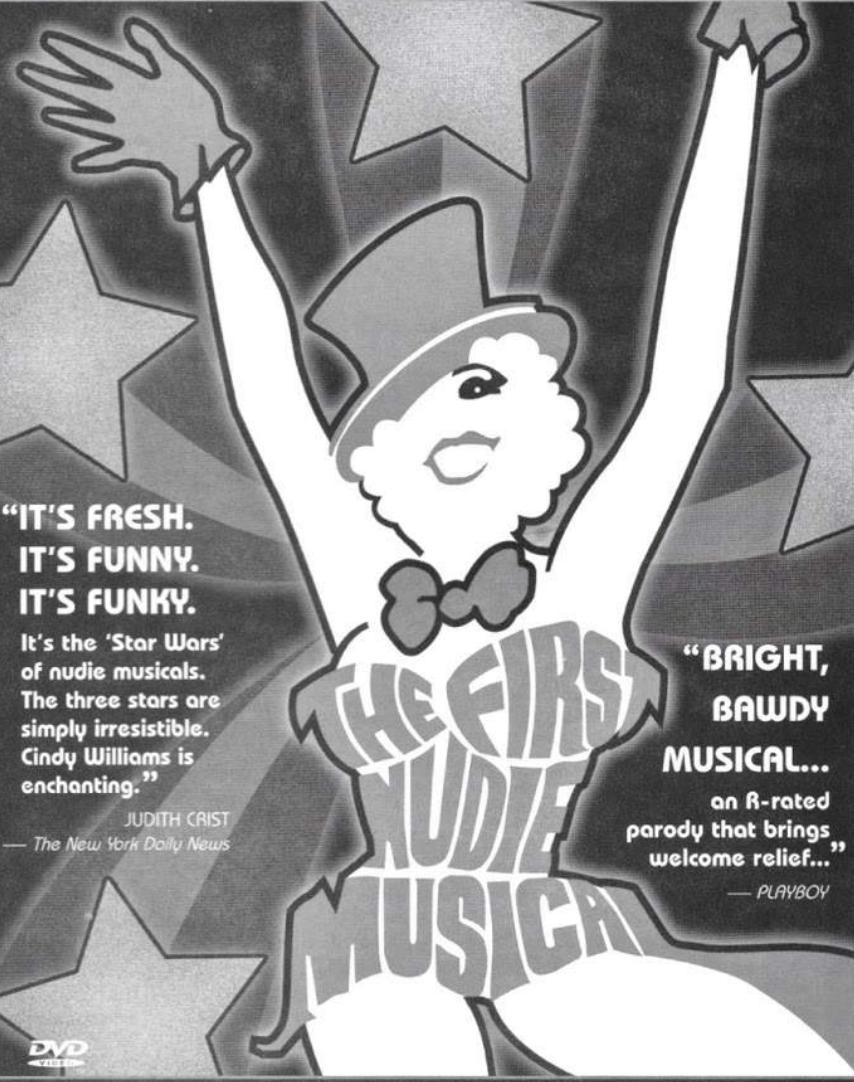
Strangely, nobody but Henry Winkler appeared concerned that starring in a film called *THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL* might not go down well with TV audiences—and TV executives.

"We were very naive," laughs Kimmel. "At that point, we had decided to do it mainstream, union and everything, so we weren't hiding anything. We just thought it was a funny idea, so ripe for spoofing. We paid for our naiveté in certain ways. *LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY* came along soon before *NUDIE MUSICAL* was released, and Cindy sort of got dubbed 'Little Miss Filth Mouth' by the press. But the movie was so innocent, really. Someone reviewed it and called it a Disney movie with breasts."

In the late sixties and early seventies, the entertainment industry was collectively dropping its pants. On the stage, the first-act finale of the hippie musical *HAIR* (1967) featured male and female cast members in the nude. The



26th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION



**"IT'S FRESH.
IT'S FUNNY.
IT'S FUNKY."**

It's the 'Star Wars' of nudie musicals. The three stars are simply irresistible. Cindy Williams is enchanting."

JUDITH CRIST
— *The New York Daily News*

**"BRIGHT,
BAWDY
MUSICAL...
an R-rated
parody that brings
welcome relief..."**

— *PLAYBOY*

starring STEPHEN NATHAN CINDY WILLIAMS BRUCE KIMMEL

Includes:

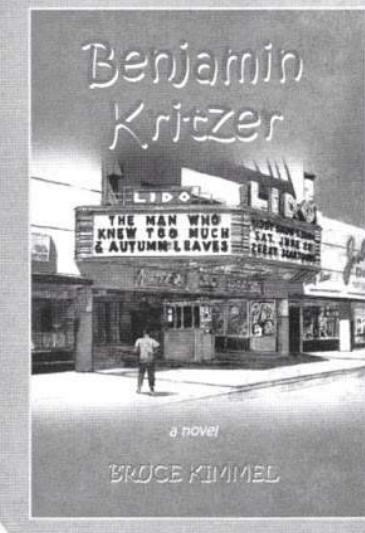
- ★ New **widescreen transfer** (enhanced for 16x9 televisions)
- ★ Two feature length **audio commentary tracks** with Bruce Kimmel, Cindy Williams and Stephen Nathan, and Bruce Kimmel and Nick Redman
- ★ New 55 minute **retrospective documentary** - *From Dollars to Donuts: An Undressing of The First Nudie Musical*, directed by Nick Redman (with optional audio commentary by Nick Redman, Bruce Kimmel and producer Michael Rosendale)
- ★ **Deleted scene** and **deleted musical number** (with commentary)
- ★ **Poster and stills gallery**
- ★ Theatrical trailer
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AT LAST THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL COMES TO DVD!

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PAGE 58 TOP: At Paramount's insistence, the notorious "dancing dildos" number was a last-minute addition to *THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL* (1976). According to Bruce Kimmel, the number cost more than the rest of the movie—put together! PAGE 58 BOTTOM: Some mags just love printing nudes! LEFT: Stars Bruce Kimmel, Cindy Williams, and Stephen Nathan all remained modestly dressed. Even so, sitcom star Williams got a reputation for making a dirty movie. RIGHT: There's nothing like romantic music for a love scene! Warbled by Wade Crookham to Artie Schafer and Susan Stewart, "Orgasm!" is the first rousing number in the film-within-the film, *COME, COME NOW*.

sexy revue *OH! CALCUTTA* followed in 1969. By 1974, serious dramas such as *EQUUS* contained lengthy scenes in which leading characters went costume-free.

Nudity on film was even more prevalent. Britt Ekland went topless for *THE NIGHT THEY RAIDED MINSKY'S* (1968). Uncharacteristically for the period, the camera gazed lovingly on the nude, sleeping, male form of Leonard Whiting in Franco Zeffirelli's *ROMEO AND JULIET* (1968), while Olivia Hussey remained chastely covered. *MIDNIGHT COWBOY* (1969) displayed the flesh of both sexes, in the persons of Jon Voight and Sylvia Miles. *WOMEN IN LOVE* (1969) unveiled Glenda Jackson, Jennie Linden, Alan Bates, and Oliver Reed. Jan-Michael Vincent went full-frontal in *BUSTER AND BILLIE* (1974). Though he could hardly have done it on network TV—not then, anyway—even Partridge Boy David ("I Think I Love You") Cassidy rebelled against his bubble-gum image by revealing some pubic hair on a nude *Rolling Stone* cover in 1972.

None of the film's stars appear nude in *THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL*, but the same can't be said for the chorus girls, if not the boys.

"It wasn't difficult finding actresses to appear nude, but it was almost impossible to find actors, which is why

they're not nude in the final number; they're wearing tails and pants. The girls are wearing tails and nothing. There are a few nude men in the picture, but it was really hard to find them. Well, it wasn't hard to find Alan Abelew, who'd be nude at the drop of a hat, but there were several others who were very difficult. In those days, there hadn't been much male nudity, not full frontal."

Did *LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY* fans think they were going to see Shirley Finney in the nude? "I'm sure they did! Since it was an R-rated movie and Cindy was in it, I'm sure they did—although she went on every talk show and made sure they knew she wasn't. She'd say, 'No, I'm not nude, but there are many around me who are.'"

THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL's original shoot took 18 days. The film was edited, previewed, and bought by Paramount, who demanded retakes and additional scenes.

"Today, if a comedy gets five good laughs," Kimmel says, "it's a smash. It's not like the old days, when you had to get a laugh every two minutes. Paramount felt that there was eight minutes in the middle of the picture that just sort of laid there. They asked us to shoot anything we wanted to, and that's how we got the scene with the dancing dildos. They gave us half the budget of the original

LEFT: Arvin (Frank Doubleday), who prefers to be called Riff, gets phallic with girlfriend Juanita (Diana Canova). Like Cindy Williams, Canova went on to star on a tremendously popular sitcom of the seventies—in her case, *SOAP*. Canova's mother, country comedienne Judy Canova, starred in such popular films as *ARTISTS AND MODELS* (1937), *SCATTERBRAIN* (1940), *SINGIN' IN THE CORN* (1946), and *HONEYCHILE* (1951). RIGHT: Harry Schechter (Stephen Nathan) sells the idea of an all-singing porno with a rousing chorus of "The First Nudie Musical."



Sex and the Sitcom! While the movies continued their efforts to lure moviegoers into theaters with sex and nudity, TV looked back on those happy days of the Fabulous Fifties, first with **HAPPY DAYS** and then with its spinoff, **LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY**, starring Penny Marshall and Cindy Williams, pictured with (clockwise from right) Betty Garrett, David L. Lander, Michael McKean, Carole Ita White, Phil Foster, and Eddie Mekka. The present day spawned such teenybopper fare as **THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY**, starring Shirley Jones, pictured with (clockwise from right) David Cassidy, Danny Bonaduce, Suzanne Crough, Brian Forster, and Susan Dey. **THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL**'s creator, Bruce Kimmel, appeared regularly as Dey's nebbishy boyfriend, but reserved his nekkid notions for the big screen. No matter—Cassidy, fed up with his squeaky clean image, bared all for the cover of *Rolling Stone* and scandalized the nation.

movie to do it! We shot it over the weekend, because they were shooting **LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY** during the week. Cindy's hair had been totally Shirleyized, so we had to put a hat on her. The dancing dildos number is famous for several reasons. One of the dildos is now one of the biggest casting directors in Hollywood—Jeff Greenburg."

Cindy Williams' costar, Stephen Nathan, had acted on TV and in the musical **1776** (1972), singing "Mama, Look Sharp." On Broadway, he appeared in **GODSPELL** (1971), and had come directly from playing Jesus to starring in **THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL**. A number of other cast members were just embarking on their careers, including future **SOAP** star Diana Canova. Remembers Kimmel:

"I discovered her in Los Angeles City College when her name was Diana Rivero, because her father was really Cuban. I had written a musical called **FEAST** that she was in, and I literally took her character and Alan Alda's character out of that musical and put them in the movie. They're literally the same characters."

"Cindy got Ron Howard to do a cameo, but I also knew Ron because I'd been on **HAPPY DAYS**. He so wanted to be a director, even then. He was fascinated that we had actually gotten the money together to do it. He was great making that cameo appearance at that point in his career. I remember when we were previewing the picture, his father called and said, 'Well, we're going to see the movie tonight; we're very excited!' I never heard back from him. I presume he was not very excited when he saw it."

The reviews in the trades were devastatingly bad. The columnists took us to task without actually having seen it. 'Oh, Cindy's in this filthy, dirty, stinking porno.' Once it started opening all over the country, though, it got the best reviews of any comedy that year. The film got screams of laughter, constant, consistent, every two minutes—and it actually did pretty well at the box office."

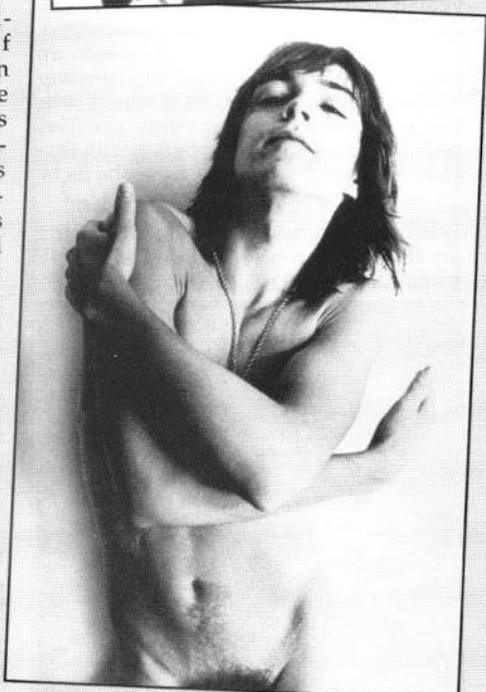
Nevertheless, Paramount decided to kill **THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL**. "Cindy had gone on the air with **LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY** several months before, and the show was a family-hour smash. It was Paramount Television, too, so it was easy to kill us. **LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY** was simply more valuable and they didn't want to chance ruining it. We ultimately found out what they were doing and got the picture back and gave it to a different distributor, World Northal. They loved the movie. It opened in New York a year after it had come out everywhere else, and it got rave reviews. It played 14 weeks in one theater in New York! We were a smash; it was very embarrassing for Paramount!"

Kimmel is very enthusiastic about the DVD and its many extra features. "The documentary is directed by Academy Award nominee Nick Redmond. I'm in it, along with Cindy, Stephen, Alan, Diana, and several dildos. It's tongue-in-cheek and also pretty informative. The film has two commentary tracks, one with Nick and myself and

the other with Cindy, Stephen, and, again, yours truly. We even went so far as to record—and I think it's a first—a commentary track to the documentary. It's Nick and I and producer Mike Rosendale, really just talking about people we don't like on the internet. And we name names!"

Among the movie's many innovations—nude musical numbers, choreographed dildos, a gaggle of television stars in "porno"—is the fact that this is one of the rare independent films of the early seventies that was shot quickly and cheaply and yet wasn't picked up for distribution by the legendary Roger Corman.

Bruce Kimmel laughs heartily. "Well, he tried to pick it up. It wasn't for want of trying, believe me. We showed it to Roger; he was one of the first people who saw it and he tried to buy it. But, as you know, Roger is not notoriously known for the money he offers. We opted for Paramount. Paramount paid enough that it covered all the costs, so we were in the black. Still, I don't know if anyone has ever seen any money for **THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL**. I certainly haven't!"



BOOK ENDS

The Scarlet Street Review of Books

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. MABUSE

David Kalat
McFarland & Co., 2001
Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640
301 pages—\$49.95

The Strange Case of Dr. Mabuse is a fascinating blend of biography, history, and film analysis that illuminates an overlooked shadow in the career of film director Fritz Lang; the entity known as Dr. Mabuse.

As much a part of German culture as Frankenstein or Dracula are in the USA and England, Dr. Mabuse's literary and cinematic roots are traced back to Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre's French supervillain Fantômas, who gained even more popularity in Louis Feuillade's film adaptations. That Feuillade's work was a strong influence on Fritz Lang is only one of many interwoven threads in this book. Author David Kalat takes readers on an intriguing and informative journey deeply into the labyrinthine world of Mabuse and those who created it.

The strength of Kalat's research and writing are in the first 13 chapters. We meet Norbert Jacques, the novelist who created Dr. Mabuse in 1921. Once one of Germany's most highly regarded writers, this forgotten author's life is revealed and his creative contributions to specific Lang films finally acknowledged. Jacques' story dovetails neatly into an examination of Fritz Lang, the filmmaker whose legendary anti-Nazi stance was contradicted by his infamous abusiveness to coworkers and women. The legends are neatly separated from the facts,

Who's the many-orbed fiend spying on lovely Dawn Addams? It's THE 1,000 EYES OF DR. MABUSE (1960).



while parallels are drawn between Lang, Dr. Mabuse, and world events in the early years of the 20th century. Rarely has a film book so succinctly placed its participants into their historical environment.

The centerpiece of the book is an examination of the four Mabuse films directed by Lang, an overview of Lang's American work, and a biography of Artur Brauner, the man responsible for the many Mabuse sequels that followed. Each film earns its own chapter, with fascinating information highlighting the action on camera and behind the scenes. Again, Kalat's careful research (he acknowledges a number of film experts here and abroad) brings to light many details either previously unpublished or available only in German. This freshens the Lang material and intrigues us with the study of the sympathetic Brauner. Brauner's role in luring Lang back to Germany while attempting to revive the German film industry in the sixties makes for compelling reading. Whether you're familiar or not with the Mabuse film canon, this is a rich and rewarding education.

If any weakness can be cited in this important book, it is in the last quarter of the book. The dizzying synopses of the lesser Mabuse films tend to blur into a mind-numbing fog if attempted in one sitting. My advice is to read the last half slowly and start planning your purchases of Dr. Mabuse DVDs. Not only has David Kalat written an excellent book on this film series, but he is the mastermind behind All Day Entertainment, the company that has released 1960's THE 1,000 EYES OF DR. MABUSE and the 1962 version of THE TESTAMENT OF DR. MABUSE on DVD.

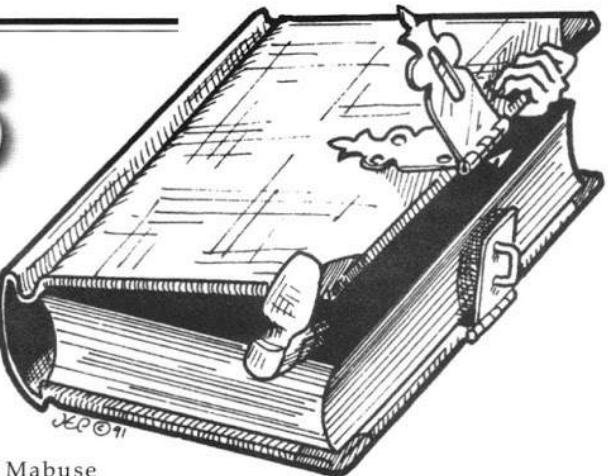
—Michael D. Walker

TO CATCH A SPY

Stuart M. Kaminsky
Carroll & Graf, 2002
230 pages—\$24

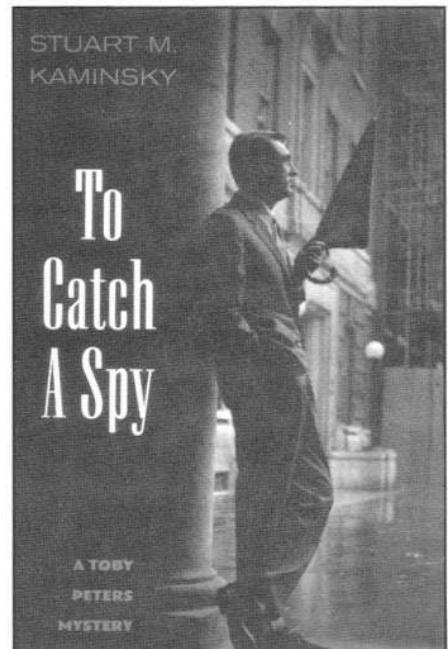
Anyone familiar with Alfred Hitchcock's THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH (1956) won't be too terribly surprised by this whodunit's surprise revelation concerning a man named George Hall—but mystery writer Stuart M. Kaminsky's plots always have more twists than the yellow brick road, and *To Catch a Spy* is no exception to this happy rule.

Toby Peters is a rumpled, slightly defective detective in 1940s Hollywood. He's seen better days, but he still manages to attract some of the glamour capital's biggest names as clients, including (in past adventures) Judy Garland, Peter Lorre, Bette Davis, Errol Flynn, Mae



West, Groucho Marx, Charles Chaplin, Fred Astaire, Humphrey Bogart, and Bela Lugosi. In the case of *To Catch a Spy*, it's—no, not the rotund Hitchcock, but suave, smooth Cary Grant, who starred for the director in a number of classic films, most notably NORTH BY NORTHWEST (1959), the movie this book most resembles incident-wise.

It's 1943 and America is at war. The detective is hired by the star to procure some compromising documents. ("I'm not



being blackmailed over some crime or sexual indiscretion," Grant tells Toby. "It's more important than that.") The man with the documents is murdered, whispering "George Hall" as he dies, and Toby and his client are sent on a mad dash to retrieve the papers before they're snatched by a bunch of Nazi sympathizers. Grant, it transpires, is secretly working for British Intelligence—which is just as well, since Toby needs all the brain power he can muster.

Help he gets—if not always of the brainy sort—from Kaminsky's usual cast of supporting characters, including Gunther Wherthman, a Swiss little person who was once a Munchkin in THE WIZ-

ARD OF OZ (1939); towering wrestler/poet Jerry Butler; grubby dentist Sheldon Minck; auto mechanic No-Neck Arnie; cop Phil Pevsner (Toby's brother); scatterbrained landlady Irene Zenobia Plaut; and Bronx-born crystal-gazer Juanita, who introduces a cryptic plot thread pertaining to Mrs. Plaut that remains disturbingly loose at story's end.

It's brisk, breezy fun, and film historian Kaminsky brings Tinseltown to vivid life (though here, as in other books in the series, he sometimes fudges a fact). The only sour note is provided by a sequence that has nothing to do with the rest of the story. Discussing blackmail, Grant is made to remark:

"A few years ago a man who had been fired from RKO publicity tried to get money out of me. He said he had photos and proof that Randolph Scott and I were lovers . . . He was wrong. My wives and a small number of young ladies could have told him that. Scotty and I shared a place for a few years. We had lots of visitors, mostly ladies."

The dialogue goes on in this tired vein for awhile, and might be dismissed as quaint if it wasn't so profoundly irritating. Surely such vital histories of gay, golden-age Hollywood as David Ehrenstein's *Open Secret* (2001) and William J. Mann's *Behind the Screen* (2002) have rendered it virtually impossible to ascribe complete and total heterosexuality to the former Archie Leech. Nevertheless, Kaminsky strives mightily to—what, save the superstar's reputation?

The charm of this mystery series stems from Kaminsky pairing his fictional detective with real-life celebrities from Hollywood's heyday. In *To Catch a Spy*, unfortunately, the author has fashioned a Cary Grant who's as much a figure of fantasy as Toby Peters.

—Richard Valley

INVESTIGATING COUPLES

Tom Soter

McFarland & Co., 2001

239 pages—\$39.95

Subtitled in that subtle McFarland manner *A Critical Analysis of The Thin Man, The Avengers and The X-Files*, Tom Soter's *Investigating Couples* is, not surprisingly, a critical analysis of *The Thin Man*, *The Avengers*, and *The X-Files*. It's also an entertaining, well-written, and very informative book.

Soter traces the history of his titular twosomes—Nick and Nora Charles, Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, John Steed and Cathy Gale, John Steed and Emma Peel—back to their ancestors in hard-boiled detective fiction and romantic screwball comedies. Dashiell Hammett, the pulp magazine scribe who hit the big time with such mysteries as *Red Harvest* (1927), *The Dain Curse* (1928), *The Maltese Falcon* (1929), and *The Glass Key* (1930), broke fresh ground when he combined the two genres in his last novel, *The Thin Man* (1934). Hammett, a Pinkerton detective before becoming a writer, based the retired shamus Nick Charles and his heiress wife, Nora, on himself and playwright Lillian Hellman. Metro-Goldwyn

Mayer refined Mr. and Mrs. Charles in the persons of William Powell and Myrna Loy (in the process rescuing Loy from playing one Oriental villainess after another in such camp classics as 1932's *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*), and the Investigating Couple was born.

THE THIN MAN (1934) and its five celluloid sequels showed that it was possible to treat such matters as murder with a light touch, a fact not lost when it came time to create *THE AVENGERS* for British television in the sixties.

Though they are unquestionably the direct descendants of the ladylike Nora Charles, Mrs. Cathy Gale (Honor Blackman), Mrs. Emma Peel (Diana Rigg), and Tara King (Linda Thorson, who goes uninvestigated in the book) were considerably different. For one thing, two of them wore a lot of leather. For another, they kicked ass.

"To me, the great secret of *THE AVENGERS*," said Patrick Macnee in an interview with Soter, "is the knowledge that woman can not only keep it going with men, but can top men, and rescue men, and they can treat men as their friend and equal without emasculating them. There's too much made of the male-masculine thing, I think."

As John Steed, Macnee subdued his opponents with a well-aimed swipe of his umbrella, while his distaff partners did so with well-aimed fists and feet. Steed didn't mind, and neither did viewers. Macnee himself much preferred Steed's stylishness to the posturings of another secret agent—James Bond.



"Somebody gave me a Bond book and said, 'I think this will help you with your character.' I read it and found it, as I always have, totally repulsive. Bond is a repulsive man. A sadist. He's completely upper-class, frightfully snobbish. He's exactly like Ian Fleming was. No, Bond is totally reprehensible to me."

The book's concluding chapters cover the most recent of Soter's subjects—FBI agents Mulder and Scully. It's more immediately familiar territory, but no less interesting for that. You'll want to investigate *Investigating Couples*.

—Drew Sullivan



Investigating Couples

A Critical Analysis of The Thin Man, The Avengers and The X-Files

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SCREEN & SCREEN

Continued from page 27

And so it goes . . .

FELLINI SATYRICON is perhaps Fellini's most visually opulent film, less a film than a dream committed to celluloid. (Encolpio is the only character present throughout, so the film can be read as his dream.) Characters appear and disappear with alarming regularity and no explanation. Locations and situations change unexpectedly. The sets are grand and the special effects are among the most realistically rendered in the director's career. His effects are often intentionally obvious, but here the realism strengthens the film's world. The costumes and cinematography are also top-notch and keep the screen drenched in color.

The main music credit is given to Nino Rota, with many other musicians and sources also credited. In fact, only one brief musical passage is readily identifiable as Rota, the rest being a mix of period and experimental music. The score works together with the sound effects to produce an aural soundscape quite similar to that found later in the films of David Lynch.

MGM offers a print that has a few seconds of minor print damage during the first several minutes, but is then spotless, with bold, almost fluorescent colors and a crisp and perfectly framed picture in enhanced 2.35:1. The sound options are Italian or English, both mono. The Italian track is by far the best; the dialogue sounds much more natural and it has a richer, more textured music and effects track than the English. The English track sounds flat and cheaply recorded; music is often at a lower volume and sound effects are sometimes missing. English, French and Spanish subtitles are also included, plus the theatrical trailer.

—Ron Morgan

THE DEEP END

20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

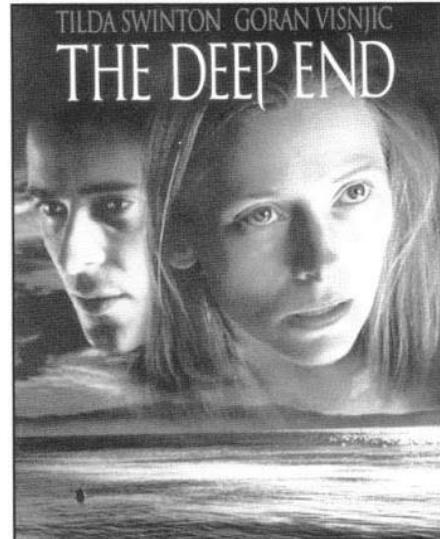
\$29.98

When THE DEEP END (2001) is at its best — a late scene with Tilda Swinton and Goran Visnjic involving a car crash is as fine as anything from the heyday of forties film noir—the film is brilliant. At other times, THE DEEP END suffers from perhaps wanting to be a little too "artistic." For example, some of the film's persistent water imagery is well-judged and pertinent on a symbolic and thematic level. (Water abounds in the film from its opening credits to its very title to where the body is "hidden" to what triggers a key plot point. The overall impression is that the characters themselves are symbolically drowning in a situation that spins ever more out of control, pulling them down.) However, when we find ourselves viewing a scene upside down through a drop of water clinging to a water faucet, the effect distracts from the very real drama of the story.

Swinton plays Margaret Hall, a fairly average woman whose husband is away on an aircraft carrier, leaving her in charge of the family. When the movie opens, we find her at a gay club called The Deep End, confronting owner Darby Reese (Josh Lucas) over his involvement with her teenage son, Beau (Jonathan Tucker). Unfortunately, her efforts only serve to worsen the situation, resulting in a scene between Reese and Beau that ends in the accidental death of Reese. (It happens after Beau leaves, so not even he knows what happens, only the viewer does). When Margaret discovers the body the next morning, she naturally assumes that Beau, bruised from his encounter with Reese, is responsible and proceeds to conceal the body under the waters of Lake Tahoe. Similarly, knowing that he didn't do it, Beau comes to assume, when his lover's body is discovered, that his mother must have done it.

This material could very easily have become risible—indeed, it could be re-written as black comedy—but THE DEEP END makes it all very straightforwardly believable by simply leaving it so that only the viewer ever knows the truth. Throughout the film, Margaret's perception of Beau is constantly challenged and forced to shift. She has to deal with realizing his sexuality, with the idea that he might be a murderer, and, when she finds herself being blackmailed by the victim's associates, with actually seeing a videotape of her son engaged in sexual activity with Reese. Similarly, Beau is made to rethink his views of his mother, whom he not only suspects murdered Reese, but comes to believe is engaged in an adulterous affair with one of her blackmailers, Alek (Visnjic).

The shrewdness of THE DEEP END lies in the fact that none of these suspicions is



ever actually addressed. It's entirely a matter of the way in which the characters look at each other. Even the strange borderline romance that occurs between Margaret and Alek, once he becomes

sympathetic to her plight, is never actually mentioned, but left to the actors and the film's clever use of dressing Margaret in the same red as Alek's car as a point of connection.

The widescreen DVD features a full-length audio commentary by writers/producers/directors Scott McGehee and David Siegel, two featurettes (including the obligatory "making of . . ."), a still photo gallery, and a theatrical trailer.

—Ken Hanke

THE HARVEY GIRLS

CALAMITY JANE

Warner Home Video

\$19.98 each

Western-flavored musicals are few and far between, and Warner Home Video has released two of the finest from this musical subgenre—MGM's THE HARVEY GIRLS (1945) and Warner's own CALAMITY JANE (1954).

THE HARVEY GIRLS features a vast array of talent—Angela Lansbury, looking



like an angel, but behaving like a devil; poker-faced comic genius Virginia O'Brien; rubber-limbed Ray Bolger; domineering salt-of-the-earth Marjorie Main; a pre-nose job Cyd Charisse—to support the film's radiant leading lady, Judy Garland. Based on the factual introduction of the Harvey chain of restaurants into the American West, the film sends a dreamy-eyed young Susan Bradley (Garland) way out West to meet her mail-mate. In a true Cyrano trick, she finds out that the romantic letters were ghosted by the one man in town she cannot stand, the ruggedly handsome Ned Trent (John Hodiak). Musical mayhem ensues as Susan finds herself at odds with bargirl Em (Lansbury) not only romantically, but professionally. Will the good-natured charms of the Harvey House waitresses win out over the irresistible allure of the Alhambra's pink and powdered plethora of wanton flesh? You betcha—this is, after all, a cotton-candied Technicolor MGM Musical! Warner's DVD pays tribute to the film's history, with an audio commentary from director George Sidney, two deleted numbers, and a stereo recording of the film's Oscar-winning Johnny Mercer/Harry Warren song, "On the Atcheson, Topeka and the Santa Fe."

Another Oscar-winning song—this one from Sammy Fain and Paul Francis Webster—became a smash hit (as well as a

Continued on page 66

The Thousand Eyes (and Three DVDs) of Dr. Mabuse

DR. MABUSE, DER SPIELER

Image Entertainment

\$39.99

THE TESTAMENT OF DR. MABUSE

THE 1000 EYES OF DR. MABUSE

Allday Entertainment

\$39.99 each

It's rare for a filmmaker to backtrack through the years to early characters and stories and explore them anew. Alfred Hitchcock and John Ford both remade films and shared with Howard Hawks a penchant for retooling basic formulae into "new" permutations. Hammer Films' Terence Fisher, too, comes to mind for his five very different looks at Baron Frankenstein over 17 years. Nevertheless, the three films Fritz Lang built around Dr. Mabuse stand alone.

For Mabuse, Norbert Jacques appropriated the supercriminal concept of Fantomas (with just a pinch of Professor James Moriarty) to spin an allegory about post-WWI; these political elements are less overt in DR. MABUSE, DER SPIELER, the two-part film Lang crafted from the novel in 1922. Mabuse is a psychiatrist, a counterfeiter who uses real currency as note paper, a gambler who wins through hypnosis, and a music hall entertainer; he keeps a makeup artist on staff for these and other impersonations. Only as the psychiatrist does he reveal his true face, although that may still not be his "real" identity; the police dub him The Great Unknown and the message is that Mabuse represents many people.

If Mabuse's identity is a mystery, so are his motives. He wrecks personal fortunes and the nation's economy less for financial gain than for power or the sadistic pleasure of manipulating others, but the Why is one of several puzzles left unanswered in the labyrinthine plotting. Lang performs some sleight of hand of his own by moving his thriller so swiftly through complications and developments that the viewer never has time to question whether any of it makes a lick of sense. Just as Jacques had borrowed heavily from the Fantomas novels, Lang borrows the delirious storytelling of Feuillade's film versions, adding horror and *film noir* elements—neither of which genres had yet been established.

In the extravagant casino sets are hints of the epic spectacles Lang would soon direct, and the same serious tone prevails. If DIE NIBELUNGEN (1924) and METROPOLIS (1927) are myths of the past and the future respectively, MABUSE was a contemporary one and was treated as such for all its pulpy content. Lang was fascinated by "junk literature" and saw the equivalent of contemporary fables in the archetypal

characters, stock situations, and black-and-white mores.

The political implications would bubble far closer to the surface when Lang made THE TESTAMENT OF DR. MABUSE (1933), which finds the archvillain confined in an asylum, scribbling away his plans for world domination much as Hitler spent his prison time writing *Mein Kampf*. Despite incarceration, Mabuse's plans are being carried out and Inspector Lohman—a carryover from M (1931)—must determine how. How much of the apparent anti-Nazi sentiment in the film is deliberate may never be ascertained—Lang's then-wife and scenarist Thea von Harbou would soon join the party—but Lang felt sufficiently threatened politically to engineer an emigration that soon landed him in Hollywood.

Lang never adjusted to the lack of autonomy or the finite budgets he encountered in Tinseltown; his prickly personality guaranteed he would never have the freedom he'd enjoyed at Ufa, and his liberal politics guaranteed a run-in with HUAC, which struck him as a rerun of his Nazi predicament. By the mid-fifties, Lang was ready to retire—but then an offer came from Artur Brauner of Germany's CCC Studios. It would unite Lang and Mabuse one last time.

Possibly Lang's experience with Hitler, McCarthy, and Hollywood "studio spies" guaranteed THE THOUSAND EYES OF DR. MABUSE (1960) would be the most paranoid of the trio. Mabuse is dead, but his spirit seems to have taken hold of another who commits similar crimes—in fact, the murder at a red light that opens the film duplicates one in TESTAMENT. All activity centers around a hotel that the Nazis rigged with video cameras and where nothing is what it seems. Every character wears at least one false face and most clues are red-herrings or a dead ends. Even Mabuse's plan—planetary nuclear destruction—is perversely self-defeating; the ending wherein the various characters reveal their true selves plays like a grotesque parody of Cold War spy games and leaves the nagging feeling that nothing has been fully resolved—including, as usual, Mabuse's true identity.

In TESTAMENT, Lang had shown Mabuse in double-exposure entering the body of a disciple, leading to some ambiguity as to whether it was the doctor's figurative or literal spirit taking hold. Lang claims he intended the former; it was a time when there was no telling which friend or neighbor would suddenly be "possessed" of the National Socialist ideology. But in the sometimes bizarre series of Mabuse films that followed Lang's final foray, the latter is heavily implied.

Without Lang, the Mabuse films became a less complex but still enjoyable series of thrillers along the lines of the early James Bond films (which they preceded). After several entries, Brauner remade TESTAMENT—although the film is not a strict remake, partly because several of the original's key sequences had already been lifted in the interim. While a less profound version, it adds a dash of puckish humor, something which in Lang's oeuvre is mostly notable by its absence. Still, there is less of a gap between approaches than a continuum; in the silent MABUSE, there's much that would resurface in American chapterplays (not to mention Hitchcock's films) and the later Mabuse films are certainly descendants of Republic serials.

Of all the extras on the current Mabuse DVDs, the most significant are the audio commentaries by David Kalat, which do much to explain the sociological context of the early films. (It might even be wise to watch DER SPIELER with the commentary first time out.) Kalat's amiable presence keeps the welter of facts from becoming dry and didactic. The TESTAMENT disc includes both Lang's original and the remake; a documentary and image galleries are among the other supplements. All prints have an excellent grayscale, but exhibit varying degrees of speckling.

—Harry H. Long

For more Mabuse, turn to this issue's BOOK ENDS on page 62.



SCREEN & SCREEN

Continued from page 64

gay anthem) for Doris Day when she tackled the rugged role of CALAMITY JANE in 1954. "Secret Love" became Day's signature song, but it's only one tune from a score that borrows inspiration freely from Irving Berlin's ANNIE GET YOUR GUN (filmed in 1950), but remains one of the best original scores of the fifties. Day's Jane is totally tomboyish, though never a hoyden, and costar Howard Keel matches her estimable energy as Wild Bill Hickok.

The DVD transfer is soft-edged (WarnerColor doesn't hold up as well as true Technicolor), and bonus features are few. Both films, however, should find their way into musical mavens' libraries: talents like Day and Garland don't come along every day, and with the dearth of musicals on the DVD forefront, these two gems from Warner are a breath of fresh country air.

—Anthony Dale

NEKROMANTIK Barrel Entertainment

\$34.95

"Ground-breakingly gruesome. The first erotic film for necrophiles!" That's how our own American Master of Poor Taste, John Waters, described the German NEKROMANTIK (1987). This independent film has been the subject of controversy ever since its original release, condemned most often by those who haven't seen it and reviewed it on reputation alone. Those copies of the film that were available for viewing in the past were shoddy fifth-generation dubs. That's all changed, now, because Barrel Entertainment has done a commendable job of putting NEKROMANTIK on DVD.

Rob (D Lorenz) makes his living cleaning up body parts after road accidents, and takes his work home with him. His place is filled with pickled body parts, as well as his kinky girlfriend, Betty (Beatrice M.). When Rob brings home a complete (if deteriorating) body, their love life (?) truly comes to—you'll pardon the expression—life, resulting in a macabre menage à trois. Poor Rob is such a loser, though, that Betty picks the corpse over him! Dejected, he resolves to take his life with an act of hari kiri. Is it the end of everything—or only the beginning?

NEKROMANTIK is shocking and, to put it mildly, not for everyone's taste. The rabbit-killing scene alone is enough to scatter most viewers. Surprisingly, the "lovemaking" scenes are not pornographic—which, paradoxically, increases their disturbance level.

The Super 8mm film stock (blown up to 16mm) is sharp and clear on the Barrel Entertainment DVD, save for the opening sequence. Extras include English subtitles, a commentary track by director Jorg Buttereit and cowriter Franz Rodenkirchen, some outtakes, a documentary titled THE MAKING OF NEKROMANTIK, a photo

gallery, trailers for other Buttereit films, and HORROR HEAVEN (a collection of amateur movies made by the director when he was a teenager, including his tribute to Mummy, Frankenstein, and Godzilla movies.)

—Kevin G. Shinnick

MOMMIE DEAREST Paramount Home Video

\$29.99

In 1978, after learning that she had been completely shut out of Joan Crawford's will, adopted daughter Christina published an autobiography that described her childhood in nightmarish terms ("I truly wished that the earth would open and just swallow me up and take me out of this eternal misery and punishment"), forever altering the image the world had entertained of the late film star. Hollywood's version, released three years later, was not a success, but soon gained notoriety as one of the campiest features in years. No other film had been the ob-



ject of so much unintentional hilarity nor plumbed the depths of show biz melodrama so deeply since VALLEY OF THE DOLLS (1967), attaining at once the status of bad-movie legend with depictions of a thoroughly unhinged Crawford

(Faye Dunaway) scrubbing floors ("I'm not mad at you, I'm mad at the dirt!"), lunging at little Christina (Mara Hobel) with a pair of scissors ("I'd rather you go bald to school than looking like a tramp!"), and, especially, going ballistic when discovering the flaxen-haired mop-pet's closet disarranged. ("No wire hangers—ever!")

Dunaway makes an indelible impression as the anal-retentive movie queen. To her credit, considering the character as written is little more than a demented witch, she creates something human out of Mommie Dearest, imbuing the dragon-lady theatrics (she is actually made to play the wire-hanger scene in a kabuki-like facial mask!) with an extraordinary dramatic aptitude. (The late, great Crawford herself remarked: "Of all the actresses—to me, only Faye Dunaway has the talent and the class and the courage it takes to make a real star.") Unfortunately, Dunaway possesses a flair for the outré as well, and it's impossible to watch her carry on without laughing, even in the most harrowing scenes. To the delight of her legions of fans for whom there really is no limit to excess, and much to her own reported dismay, Mommie typecast her in fruity, over-the-top characterizations.

Howard Da Silva is the only other Mommie performer to really register, in his appearance as MGM boss Louis B. Mayer. Steve Forrest, costarring as one of Joan's boyfriends, is the younger brother of Dana Andrews (who starred with Crawford in 1947's DAISY KEN-YON.) Irene Sharaff's period costumes (her cinematic swan song) are sensational and Henry Mancini's score one of his better late-career efforts.

The DVD release is an inexpensive affair, but the handsome production looks good in widescreen and is marred only by occasional splotches and scratching. Paltry extras include a photo gallery and a trailer that makes the film look a whole lot better than it actually is . . .

—Jon Anthony Carr

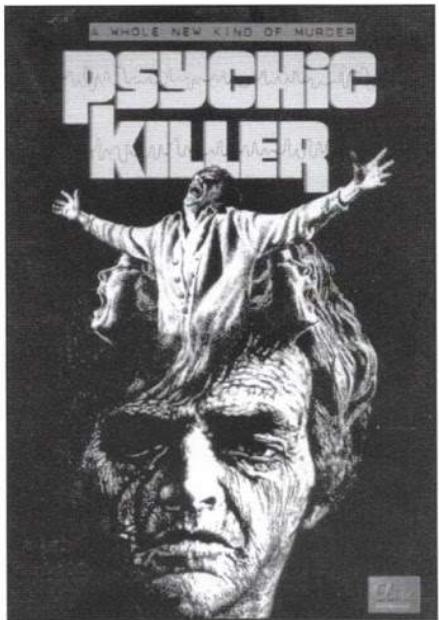
PSYCHIC KILLER Elite Entertainment

\$24.95

Jim Hutton wakes up screaming at the start of PSYCHIC KILLER (1975), a movie that epitomizes one type of seventies drive-in fare. This is the sort of B thriller that offers a mild degree of exploitation and unpleasant flashes of violence to compensate for a no longer in demand cast of stars. Hutton plays Arnold Masters, a man who has spent time in a psycho ward for a murder he did not commit. A fellow inmate (Stack Pierce) commits suicide and leaves his possessions to Arnold, including a mysterious amulet that allows its owner to kill people from afar. The first time Arnold uses the trinket, he appears to expire and is, in fact, declared medically dead—only to wake up on the coroner's table! After that unnerving incident, he's shipped home, where he

carries out his revenge on those who done him wrong.

The movie becomes a series of set pieces in which we are introduced to characters we've never seen before, then watch them get disposed of in vicious ways. The initial victims are connected to Arnold in some way, but the later ones



seem tossed in to pad the running time and provide some violence for the trailer (included in the DVD package). Between these scenes, we are introduced to Lieutenant Morgan (Paul Burke), who is investigating the crimes when he isn't jumping into the sack with Arnold's psychiatrist (Julie Adams).

Those looking for cheap thrills will find Whit Bissell undressing a woman for some lovemaking that (thankfully) never takes place and a very disheveled Neville Brand yelling at Della Reese before being attacked by a side of beef. Aldo Ray appears as Morgan's police partner. The ever-dull Rod Cameron shows up for a single scene as a doctor and Nehemiah Persoff plays a parapsychologist, hoping in vain that his explanation for Arnold's behavior is as riveting as Simon Oakland's summing up of Anthony Perkins' insanity at the end of *PSYCHO* (1960). Then there's Mary Wilcox, playing a nurse who unbuttons her blouse as she undulates before her bedridden patient, then continues gyrating in the hallway for her own pleasure.

As the lead wacko, Jim Hutton (father of Tim) tries too hard to escape the nice guy image he established in several light comedies of the sixties and as TV's *ELERY QUEEN*. Behind the cameras (and credited as one of the writers) is Raymond Danton, who used to be billed as Ray Danton when he had the lead in *THE RISE AND FALL OF LEGS DIAMOND* (1960) and *THE GEORGE RAFT STORY* (1961). His talents as a filmmaker are no more impressive than they were as a stoic, tough-guy performer. The DVD is

letter-boxed and the print is fine, though I don't imagine anyone but avid Whit Bissell archivists will need to have a copy on their shelf.

—Barry Monush

**THE THREE STOOGES:
ALL TIME FAVORITES
GREATEST HITS AND RARITIES**
Anchor Bay Entertainment
\$14.98 each
THREE SMART SAPS
Columbia Tristar
\$24.95

"Hey, Moe! Hey, Larry! We're on DVD!" "Are you sure, puddinhead?" "Why, soitely!" The Three Stooges are available on DVD from Anchor Bay Entertainment, while Columbia Tristar continues its multivolume release of Stooges shorts.

ALL TIME FAVORITES contains three main categories, **FAMILY ALBUM**, **JERKS OF ALL TRADES**, and **KOOK'S TOUR**. **FAMILY ALBUM** presents the life histories of the Horowitz and Feinstein families—better known as the Howards (Moe, Shemp, and Curly) and Fine (Larry). This section also covers the Stooges' early days with Ted Healy, the succession of Stooges, and how the Stooges spent their off-Stooge time. It's a must for all true Stoogeologists. **JERKS OF ALL TRADES** is a television pilot, taped live on October 12, 1949. The show is funny, although the presentation is wrought with skips and jumps, and the footage is quite grainy and dusty. Stooge foil Emil Sitka joins Moe, Larry, and Shemp in the hijinks. Phil Berle, brother of Milton Berle produced the show, which never sold. **KOOK'S TOUR**, a travelogue starring Moe, Larry, and Curly Joe DeRita, marks the last time that The Three Stooges performed together, and is another TV pilot. During filming, Larry suffered a debilitating stroke and could no longer proceed with the project. The show was filmed on 8mm stock, then transferred to 16mm, and finally to tape. The Stooges attempt a little comedy, but it just wasn't like the good 'ol days!

GREATEST HITS AND RARITIES features four public domain shorts (1936's



wonderfully funny *DISORDER IN THE COURT*, 1947's *SING A SONG OF SIX PANTS*, 1947's *BRIDELESS GROOM*, and 1949's *MALICE IN THE PALACE*), plus TV shows and ads featuring the Stooges, including *THE ED WYNN COMEDY CARAVAN*, and a car wax commercial.

THREE SMART SAPS features five shorts—**THREE LITTLE BEERS** (1935), **THREE SMART SAPS** (1942), **THREE**

LOAN WOLVES (1946), **THREE ARIAN NUTS** (1951), and **THREE DARK HORSES** (1952). The digitally-remastered audio and video make these vintage comedy shorts look and sound brand new. Hail, Columbia!

—Dan Clayton

THE MAN WITH BOGART'S FACE
Image Entertainment
\$24.99

I once met the star of this movie, Robert Sacchi, at a fund raiser with a CASABLANCA (1942) theme. His resemblance to Bogie was uncanny! His voice and mannerisms were striking, but Robert Sacchi was no Bogie. I was unimpressed, because I foolishly wanted him to be who he portrayed, but I remained objective when it came time to watch **THE MAN WITH BOGART'S FACE** (1980). His performance is fun and likable.

The film features a plethora of famous names and the locations aren't bad, either—particularly the boat scenes, since Bogie was such a boating enthusiast. There are fun cameos by Yvonne De Carlo (who doesn't speak a word), George Raft, and even Robert Osborn, the host on cable's Turner Classic Movies.

The story concerns private eye Sam Marlowe (Sacchi) who gets plastic surgery to look like Humphrey Bogart. He hires a cute, dumb blonde secretary (Misty Rowe, who's quite funny). His first client, Elsa (Olivia Hussey in the Ingrid Bergman role) soon appears on the scene, followed soon after by Gena (Michelle Phillips filling in for Lauren Bacall, though Marlowe compares her to Gene Tierney). Victor Buono does his best Sidney Greenstreet impression as Commodore Anastas, and Herbert Lom appears as Mr. Zebra, the film's Peter Lorre clone. It's a very MALTESE FALCON (1941) type of adventure, with all the characters searching for the valuable "Eyes of Alexander the Great."

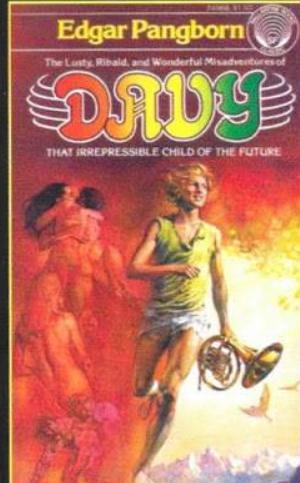
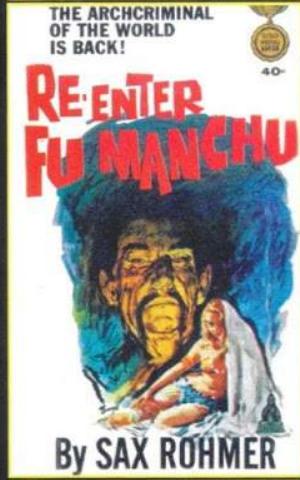
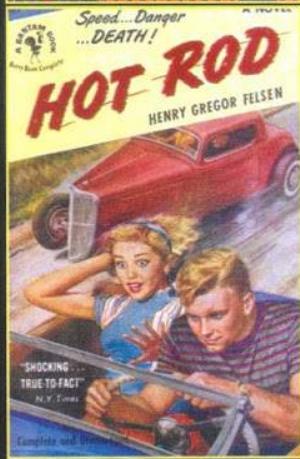
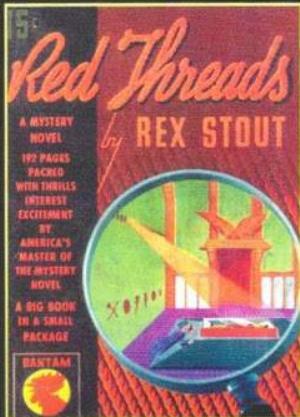
Overlook the clumsiness of some of the dialogue and performances and **THE MAN WITH BOGART'S FACE** is worth recommending to Bogie buffs, if for no other reason than the overt and underlying references to his classic films.

—Harriet Harvey

**VINCENT PRICE:
THE SINISTER IMAGE**
All Day Entertainment
\$24.99

Under the guidance of its founder, David Kalat, independent DVD label All Day Entertainment has given Vincent Price enthusiasts a reason to rejoice with the release of **VINCENT PRICE: THE SINISTER IMAGE**. With the help of writer, historian, and originator of The Sinister Image concept, David Del Valle, the DVD contains an entire 62-minute interview with Vincent Price and Del Valle from 1987. In keeping with the show's primary theme, the interview focuses on Price's

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Beginning in the late thirties, pulp mags faced the economic horror of fresh competition in the form of paperbacks. By the mid-fifties, the pulps were history. Paperbacks are still with us. Some examples (the year denotes publication of this particular edition): Rex Stout's *Red Threads* (1940), a Nero Wolfe mystery; Henry Gregor Felsen's *Hot Rod* (1951), one of the earliest juvie novels of the fifties; Sax Rohmer's *Re-enter Fu Manchu* (1957), the penultimate adventure of the Devil Doctor; Edgar Pangborn's *Davy* (1976), a bawdy pansexual fantasy; and David V. Reed's *The Thing That Made Love* (1951).

COVER GIRLS, GUYS, AND GHOULS

Continued from page 57

movies, and comic strips. With the advent of prohibition in 1919, violent crime became an everyday event, and crime fiction and two-fisted detective tales (more fists, less detection) gained in popularity. The Great Depression spread gloom o'er the land, and weird tales of the supernatural were a welcome escape. (Better the horrors of the undead than the terrors of a crumbling economy!) Money was tight, but the pulps provided inexpensive entertainment. Even cheaper—if you could afford the initial investment, that is—was radio.

It was clearly a case of "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em," and publishers exploited radio to the hilt. One of the pulps' most popular characters, in fact, had made his debut over the airwaves—The Shadow! On July 31, 1930, THE DETECTIVE STORY HOUR opened with a reading of several magazine stories. Soon, the stories were being dramatized rather than simply read, and a sinister host called The Shadow began to introduce them. Listeners were intrigued, and before long the character had his own radio series, as well as his own Street & Smith publication.

The late thirties brought fresh and ultimately fatal challenges to the pulps in the form of competition from two new sources—comics and paperback books. The comic book wasn't new, exactly; it had been around since the previous decade, but mostly in the form of reprints of newspaper comic strips. It was only when the industry began publishing original material in color—and following the smash debut of Superman in a 1938 issue of *Action Comics*—that sales quickly flew up, up, and away from rock bottom. The Youth of America began to abandon The Shadow, Doc Savage, and The Spider in favor of Clark Kent and such fellow super heroes as The Batman (joined

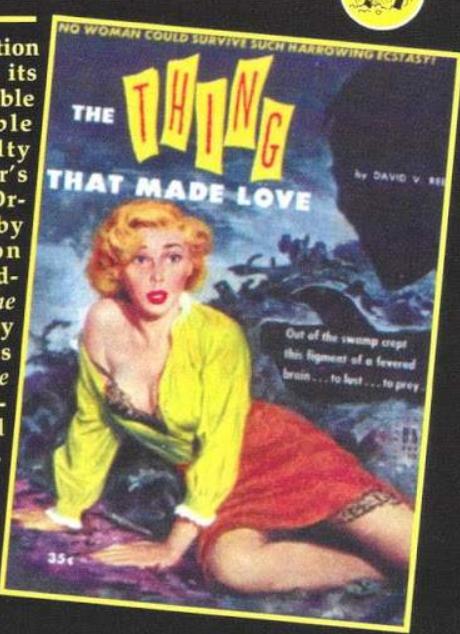
soon after by Robin the Boy Wonder), Wonder Woman, Captain Marvel (with Mary Marvel and Captain Marvel Jr.), The Flash, The Sub Mariner, The Spectre, The Human Torch, Hawkman, Dollman, and Captain America and his own boy wonder, Bucky.

Paperbacks, which began to gain in popularity with a reprint of James Hilton's 1936 fantasy *Lost Horizon* in 1939, pinched the pulps' adult audience as deftly as the comics had kidnapped the kids. The aptly named Pocket Books offered inexpensive novels and short-story collections in a convenient size. World War II saw an increase in the need for inexpensive entertainment, and this time it was paperbacks rather than pulps that readily filled the G. I. bill. Our boys overseas—like the soldiers of the Civil War before them—discovered that paperbacks were easy to carry and a handy escape from the all too real horrors of war. Nor did the new format suffer from the sleazy reputation of the pulps.

Following World War II, the pulps began a slow fade to oblivion. With the single exception of *Astounding*, Street & Smith dumped their entire pulp line in 1949. The same year brought attacks on comic books that almost wiped them off the face of the Earth, too—and they weren't nearly as sexy, unless you believed those rumors about Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson. Gershon Legman wrote in *Parade of Pleasure* (1949) that the two most popular comic-book publishers of the day were "... staffed entirely by homosexuals and operating out of our most phalliform skyscraper," children's-book author Sterling North called comics "sex serials," and child psychologist Dr. Frederic Wertham wrote *The Seduction of the Innocent: The Influence of Comic Books on Today's Youth* (1954). The comics industry staggered, but saved itself by creating the comics code, which banned sex, violence, and the use of such words as "terror," "horror," and "weird." The pulps, which had thrived on the liberal use of those same words in their titles, staggered and died, though some were instantly reborn as digest-sized magazines. Nevertheless, by the mid-fifties, pulp fiction were a thing of the past.

Ah, but what a past . . . !

A splendid introduction to pulp fiction and its competition is available in three coffee-table books from specialty publisher Collector's Press of Portland, Oregon: *Pulp Culture* by Frank M. Robinson and Lawrence Davidson (1998, \$39.95), *The History of Mystery* by Max Allan Collins (2001, \$45), and *The Great American Paperback* by Richard A. Lupoff (2001, \$60). Each book is admirably researched, and the illustrations are breathtakingly reproduced.



Kolchak

The Night Stalker Returns

by Drew Sullivan

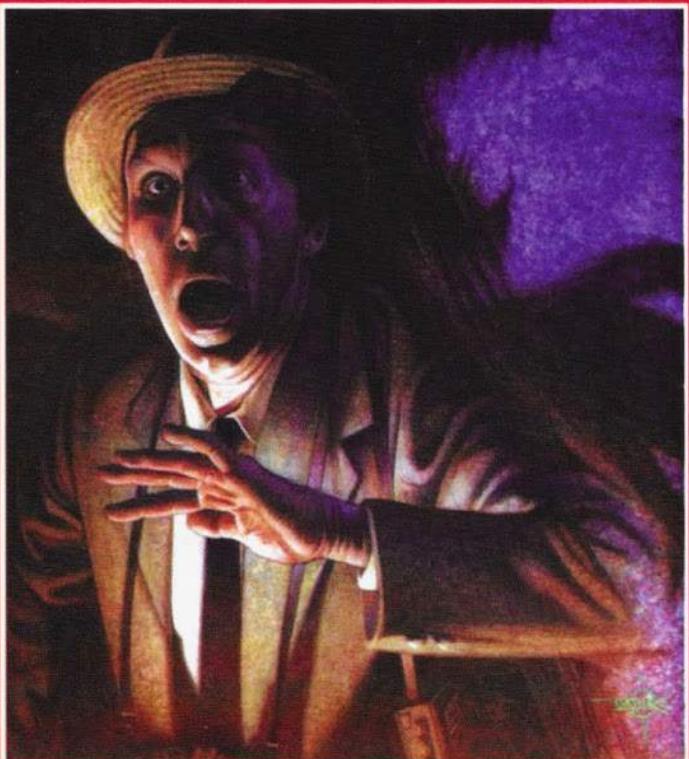
It's been announced and/or rumored often enough. "Carl Kolchak, better known as the Night Stalker, is back!" He's back in a TV reunion movie! (Star Darren McGavin declined to have anything to do with it, refusing to ever work with producer Dan Curtis again.) He's back in a big-budget theatrical feature with an all-new cast! (Nick Nolte was among those mentioned for the lead; it never happened.) He's back as a "special guest character" on the paranormal nineties hit inspired by the NIGHT STALKER telefilms and TV series—THE X-FILES! (McGavin guest-starred not as Kolchak, but as an ex-FBI agent.) He's back in an exciting new series of novels. (Mark Dawidziak's *Grave Secrets* appeared in 1994; a further adventure, *The Grand Inquisitor* by Doug Murray, went unpublished.) He's back in a comic book!

And guess what? He is back in a comic book!

Carl Kolchak first caught the public's attention in the 1971 TV movie THE NIGHT STALKER, produced by Dan Curtis, written by Richard Matheson, and directed by John Llewellyn Moxey. From the first, he was a crack newspaper reporter whose gifts included a penchant for getting involved in supernatural shenanigans, but didn't include patience, tact, or fashion sense. (Whatever the weather, Kolchak has one standard outfit: battered straw hat, seersucker suit, and tennis shoes.) He fought Las Vegas vampire Janos Skorzeny (Barry Atwater) in THE NIGHT STALKER; crazed, seemingly immortal Seattle Dr. Richard Malcolm (Richard Anderson) in the sequel THE NIGHT STRANGLER (1972); and assorted Chicago werewolves, mummies, zombies, doppelgangers, and witches in the series KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER that followed the films. With him all the way—with him, though against him, that is—was long-suffering newspaper editor Tony Vincenzo (Simon Oakland), whose ulcer might just as well have been christened "Little Carl."

Kolchak and Vincenzo were created by Jeff Rice in an unpublished novel that led to the television films and series. (The novel was later published, and, reversing the process of book-to-script that marked it, Rice adapted Richard Matheson's NIGHT STRANGLER script into a second novel.) Moonstone Comics went straight to the source for their new comic, hiring Rice to recreate the Las Vegas vampire story for the first issue. Rice combined aspects of his original story and Matheson's TV script, adding some wholly new scenes for good measure. The interior art is the dynamic work of Gordon Purcell and Terry Pallot; Ken Meyer Jr. is responsible for the equally striking cover (pictured Top Right).

Moonstone has great plans for "Kolchak the Komic" and, in addition to Rice, they've signed the right people to get the job done. Mark Dawidziak (who, in addition to writing *Grave Secrets*, penned 1991's *The Night Stalker Companion*, the definitive account of all things Kolchakian) is the adviser for the entire series. The second issue's tale, "The Get of Belial," is based on an unfilmed script for the TV series and adapted by Joe Gentile. Award-winning mystery writer Stuart Kaminsky, whose ruffled 1940s gumshoe Toby Peters bears some resemblance to Kolchak, has written the original story "Fever Pitch," scheduled for the third issue (with art by Christo-



pher Jones and Barbara Schulz). Gentile returns for the fourth issue in partnership with Trevor Von Eden, for a story ominously labeled "Like Lambs to the Slaughter."

When KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER set Carl and Tony down in the Windy City at the INS news service, they were joined by several fellow employees—sweet-natured advice to the lovelorn columnist Miss Emily Cowles (Ruth McDevitt); uppity and uptight Ron



Updyke (Jack Grinnage); and the big boss' hapless niece, Monique Marmelstein (Carol Ann Susi). Kolchak also acquired a contact at the Chicago morgue—Gordon "Gordy the Ghoul" Spangler (John Fiedler), adept at taking bets when not checking in the occasional corpse. All have become beloved and vital parts of the Night Stalker mythology, and here's hoping they'll all relocate to Los Angeles (or wherever our beloved, bedraggled Night Stalker winds up next) and join Carl in his shuddery new comic-book exploits!



ELLERY QUEEN

Continued from page 41

The title hints at a connection with Queen's 1953 novel *The Scarlet Letters*, in which "George Spelvin" (the traditional pseudonym adopted by an actor with both a bit part in a play and a featured role) crops up again, but nothing of the radio script seems to have been used in the book.

The next week's adventure, "The Bad Boy" (July 30, 1939), is the earliest Queen radio play to survive on tape, although not in its original form. On January 4, 1948, eight and a half years after its presentation on CBS, George Zachary reassembled the actors who'd been regulars on the Queen series for most of its first 15 months on the air—Marlowe, Ortega, de Corsia—and restaged the episode for NBC's Sunday afternoon series THE FORD THEATRE. Surviving tapes of this broadcast allow us to hear a 60-minute Queen radio play, but without the theorizing of the guest armchair Sherlocks and with substantial revision of the original script. In a December 1947 letter to mystery writer and critic Anthony Boucher, Manny Lee said that upon hearing of Zachary's plan to rebroadcast the play "I asked George to send me the script. It confirmed some of my worst fears, and I spent about 36 hours more or less consecutively rewriting it. Gad, some of the dialogue!" Apparently the plot remained unaltered. "The Bad Boy" is set in an old brownstone overlooking Washington Square and furnished with several elements from Queen's 1932 novel *The Tragedy of Y*, including a secret room, a vicious old matriarch, and a precocious little boy. The challenge for Ellery and the listener is to solve the murder of hateful Sarah Brink, who was poisoned by arsenic in a serving of rabbit stew and found dead in her bed with several dozen live bunnies loose in the room. Among the clues is a top hat more or less borrowed from Queen's 1929 debut novel, *The Roman Hat Mystery*, although this time its owner is a vaudeville magician. The plot is far from watertight: Ellery never explains how the one portion of stew could have been harmless and the other fatal, and a quick phone call to the police would have stopped the story in its tracks before the curtain ever rose. But Brad Barker gives a fine performance as the eight-year-old whose fantasies of intrigue and death suddenly become real.

The gimmick in "The Flying Needle" (August 6, 1939) seems to have involved blowing a poisoned needle through a soda straw, a feat to which George Zachary devoted several hours one afternoon before the air date to make sure it would work. "The Secret Partner" (August 27, 1939), which entangles Ellery and Nikki in a plot to smuggle diamonds from the Netherlands into the United States in shipments of tulip bulbs, was later adapted into a serialized comic book whose nine four-page installments, given away at Gulf Oil stations on successive Sundays during May and June of 1940, are extremely rare and valuable today.

"The Three Rs" (September 10, 1939) is another of the dozen which Dannay and Lee later recycled as short stories (this one published in *EQMM*, September 1946) and as installments in *Calendar of Crime*. As a new academic year begins and students and teachers all over the United States return more or less voluntarily to their classrooms, the administration of Barlowe College hires Ellery to locate one of its faculty, a Poe scholar who vanished in the Ozarks during the summer. Ellery's investigation along the Missouri/Arkansas border turns up some intriguing clues, including a detective-story manuscript and a skeleton with two missing fingers, but the solution sounds more like a Jon L. Breen parody than like genuine Queen, and the final plot twist turns the whole show into a farce. Just two

weeks later came "The Lost Treasure" (September 24, 1939), in which a retired explorer is murdered after inviting Ellery to do some detective work on his private island, where Captain Kidd is rumored to have buried some of his loot centuries before. This episode, too, was later adapted by Dannay and Lee into a short story ("The Needle's Eye," *EQMM*, August 1951) collected in *Calendar of Crime*.

In "The Mother Goose Murders" (October 8, 1939), Ellery visits an old hotel to investigate a series of killings with nursery-rhyme motifs. Robert Strauss, taking a week off from his Doc Prouty role to play the mild-mannered proprietor Mr. Wiggins, turned out to be the killer, but the major significance of this play is that it may inadvertently have saved the Queen series from early cancellation. The high executives of CBS, Dannay recalled at the University of California in 1977, "did not believe that mysteries [meaning fair-play detective stories] would serve as good materials for radio in those days." And to make matters worse, the series had so far failed to attract a commercial sponsor and was still running as a "sustainer." But that evening a water hose burst in the transmitter cooling system of WBBM, the CBS affiliate station in Chicago, and forced the episode off the air nine minutes before the end of the hour. The station was besieged by literally thousands of angry phone calls from listeners demanding to be told the murderer's identity. Ad agency veteran that he was, Fred Dannay believed at first that this widely reported incident was just a publicity stunt. He visited the CBS vice president who had insisted that fair-play detective stories would never make it on radio and asked him point blank: "Did you plant that incident in Chicago? If so it's one of the most brilliant moves you've ever made!" But the executive swore that it had really happened and, as both he and Dannay saw at once, it was a demonstration more convincing than any poll that the Queen series was drawing a large and avid audience.

The cousins' pay was raised to \$350 a week and sponsors soon began to make offers, although it wasn't until late April 1940 that Gulf Oil picked up the series and commissioned the EQ comic books that the company's filling stations gave away during May and June.

THE ADVENTURES OF ELLERY QUEEN remained on the air until 1948. By that time, the second World War was over, and American troops were settling down at home. It was the end of Ellery Queen as a star of U.S. radio, but far from the end of his detective career. Indeed, Fred Dannay and Manny Lee were at the peak of their powers as writers when the Queen show left the air, and their next two novels, *Ten Days' Wonder* (1948) and *Cat of Many Tails* (1949), are among their finest. Manny and Kaye Lee returned to the east coast and made their new home in suburban Connecticut, first in Westport, later on a rustic 63-acre estate in Roxbury. By 1954, they were raising a total of eight children. Manny had been a city boy, but he took to the life of a country gentleman as if to the manor born, buying a station wagon for the family, keeping chickens and cows, helping make butter and pasteurized milk for home consumption, planning a garden, declaring his property a game preserve, adding to his collections of stamps and medals and phonograph records. In his workroom, a small converted cottage on his grounds that had been a schoolhouse in the Revolutionary War era, he continued his primary job of fleshing out Fred's synopses into the later novels of Queen's third period, in which complex deductive puzzlement was fused with in-depth characterizations, magnificently detailed evocations of place and mood, and occasional ventures into social concern. For many of his vivid details he drew on family and friends. "My mother would use pet words and mannerisms that



Ellery Queen on the air.

would frequently appear in his books," said Manny and Kaye's oldest daughter, Christopher Rebecca Lee. "When I was a teenager, it would wreck it for me. I'd be reading about this glamorous woman and then out would come one of my mother's phrases." Among the best Queen novels of this time were *The Origin of Evil* (1951) with its strong Darwinian motifs, *The Glass Village* (1954) with its anti-McCarthy overtones, and the gerontological *Inspector Queen's Own Case* (1956). When not busy on a novel, Manny recast old EQ radio scripts into short stories that sold at top prices to periodicals such as *This Week*. The noise level of his collaborations with Fred Dannay remained as high as ever. Manny's son Rand Lee was an ear-witness to some of the fights. "Often I would pick up the phone, hoping the line was free, and put down the receiver moments later with Dad's and Fred's arguing voices still ringing in my ears. On one occasion, Dad threw down a plot outline and exclaimed, 'He gives me the most ridiculous characters to work with and expects me to make them realistic!'"

THE TOWERS OF FU MANCHU

Continued from page 47

(Mona Chong), the whole scheme comes crashing down around him when Weston and his police posse travel to China and play the palace.

Having directed numerous episodes of THE SAINT and SECRET AGENT for British television, Jeremy Summers would seem a perfect choice to helm THE VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU. He isn't. He brings little to the production beyond some pleasantly framed camera setups and a slight propensity for needless zoom shots. Summers is at his best in the scenes spotlighting the bogus Nayland Smith, who looks at first like a scarred reject from one of Hammer's Frankenstein films, and later like a pasty-faced zombie. The standard explosive finale is a complete dud, with everyone but Fu Manchu and Lin Tang filing quickly out of the palace and Christopher Lee looking right and left as though in search of something—a director, most likely.

Still, THE VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU has its worthwhile moments, and Howard Marion-Crawford is touching as a Dr. Petrie devastated by his friend's murder conviction and execution. (It seems almost cruel that the film doesn't forego the tired "world shall hear from me" coda for a touching reunion scene between Petrie and Smith.) Filmed in Eastmancolor, VENGEANCE played most cities in inexpensive black-and-white prints, and received next to no publicity. It deserved better, which is more than can be said for the final two films in the series.

"I can only say this again . . . you can take a marvelous character, a marvelous series of stories, and by doing it so cheaply, make it look cheap; write absurd and ridiculous stories, and turn the thing into a travesty . . . We went to Brazil. One would have thought that, with this very exotic background, there would have been an exotic quality to the basic story . . . It was an obvious misuse of local color: geographical, ethnological, and photographic."

—Christopher Lee

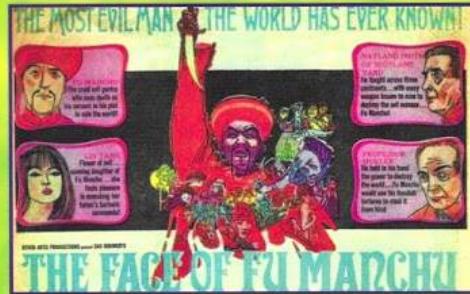
After a period of silence, the diabolical Devil Doctor was hard at work once again in THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU (1968), trying to dominate the world. His plan this time: kidnap young girls (anyone sense a pattern here?) and impregnate them with a deadly poison. Thanks to this poison, the femmes are genuinely fatale, giving a literal kiss of death to Fu Manchu's intended targets (world leaders, etc.). The demented mastermind sends one of these girls to Sir Dennis Nayland Smith (Richard Greene, taking over for Douglas Wilmer), who doesn't die (guess he's not much of a kisser), but goes blind (well, you know what they say) and



Fu Manchu (Christopher Lee) gazes impassively at Jules Merlin (Rupert Davies) while Merlin watches his daughter (Carole Gray) commits coldblooded murder in **THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU** (1966).

hovers on the edge of death. Together with his faithful sidekick, Dr. Petrie (Howard Marion Crawford), Smith ventures to South America, where Fu Manchu is now headquartered, in a desperate effort to save the world. With most movie franchises, one thing is inevitable: a gradual decrease in quality. Harry Alan Towers' series of Fu Manchu thrillers is, unfortunately, no exception. Nevertheless, the film still boasted some impressive production values—perhaps the most impressive of the entire series. Looking for a fresh approach, Towers turned to Spanish director Jess Franco, whose recent film SUCCUBUS had impressed everybody from Fritz Lang to James Nicholson and Samuel Z. Arkoff of American International Pictures.

Born in Madrid in 1930, Jesús Franco Manera is the epitome of the cult movie director. He began his career in the mid-fifties as assistant director, before helming his first feature, the obscure TENEMOS ENEMOS 18 ANOS, in 1959. In 1961, he made his breakthrough with THE AWFUL DR. ORLOF. With its silky, expressionistic black-and-white cinematography and bursts of eroticism and sadism, the film represented a logical extension of the surgical horrors of Terence Fisher's Frankenstein films for Hammer, while pointing towards the more baroque excesses of Italian directors such as Riccardo Freda and Mario Bava. Granted creative freedom by producer Adrian Hoven, Franco created his most unusual and distinctive work with 1967's blatantly erotic and dreamlike NECRONOMICON (aka, SUCCUBUS). The nonlinear picture impressed not only Fritz Lang, but Harry Alan Towers, who asked the Spanish director to work for him. Out of their collaboration came the Sax Rohmer trio BLOOD OF FU MANCHU (1968), CASTLE OF FU MANCHU (1968), and SUMURU (1968), as well as the women-in-prison drama 99 WOMEN (1968), the extraordinary VENUS IN FURS (1968), the overstuffed pseudo-Sade JUSTINE AND JULIET (1969), the impressive BLOODY JUDGE (1970), the disappointing COUNT DRACULA (1970), and that infamous slice of Sadeian exploitation that broke Christopher Lee out in a rash, EUGENIE: THE STORY OF HER JOURNEY INTO PERVERSION (1970).



Towers took full advantage of Franco's speed and maximized the length of his contract. Their collaborations enabled the director to work with such fine actors as Christopher Lee, George Sanders, Leo Genn, Klaus Kinski, Jack Palance, and Dennis Price, whose presence ensured worldwide distribution. Revered by some, damned by others, Franco seemed an ideal choice to explore the exotic nature of Rohmer's universe. Sadly, though, he proved either unwilling or unable to meet the challenge.

THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU isn't a total disaster, but it clearly pales in comparison to its predecessors. Cinematographer Manuel Merino, who shot many films for Franco, here seems to be trying to emulate the color-drenched aesthetic of Mario Bava, but the end result is gaudy instead of seductive. The locales are bland. Production values haven't reached rock bottom just yet (that would come with the next and last film in the series), but they're certainly low. And all sense of adventure and intrigue is curiously absent. At his best on *BLOOD*, Franco manages a competent B-grade action film; at his worst, he seems a rank amateur.

If nothing else, *BLOOD* gives Christopher Lee some opportunities to shine as the Yellow Peril, and he plays the character with some degree of enthusiasm. (Franco's subsequent *CASTLE OF FU MANCHU* contains so little screen time for the actor that he might as well have been credited as guest star.) Series regulars Tsai Chin and Howard Marion Crawford are reliable as always, and Maria Rohm (Mrs. Harry Alan Towers) is certainly fetching as the damsel in distress. (Her best role came in another Franco film in 1968, the marvelous *VENUS IN FURS*.) Guest star Shirley Eaton (best known for being painted gold from head to toe in 1964's *GOLDFINGER*) is sometimes credited with playing a larger role, that of the girl who blinds Nayland Smith, but in fact she appears in some rather pointless footage consisting of outtakes from *SUMURU*, the shooting of which overlapped with this production. (It's possible that her role was more substantial in one of the European cuts of the film. Several different running times are listed, and it's rare when a Franco film exists in one comprehensive edition.) Eaton has said that her very brief appearance—she's billed with Richard Greene as "Guest Star"—was done without her knowledge or consent, supposedly as part of *SUMURU*. Franco played a similar trick on Howard Vernon during the filming of *SUCCUBUS*, and the actor was so furious that he threatened to sue, soon after, Vernon became an essentially permanent fixture in Franco's films.

Richard Greene had been a leading man in the thirties and forties (among his credits is the role of Sir Henry Baskerville in the 1939 version of *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*), before finding his greatest success as Robin Hood on TV in the fifties. He's no more than competent as Nayland Smith, unfortunately, lacking the thoughtfulness of Douglas Wilmer and the energy of Nigel Green. He doesn't get much of a chance to shine, though, since his screen time is fairly short.

Continued on page 73

Colorful and enjoyable as much of the film is, the climax is nothing short of disastrous. Whatever his skills as a director, Jess Franco proves to have no skill whatever when it comes to action. (The same can be said for the action scenes in *SUMURU*.) Still, the whole concept of a kiss of death is perversely satisfying (one of the film's several alternate titles, in fact, is *KISS AND KILL*), and is perhaps the one idea that reveals the personality of *BLOOD*'s director. It would be wrong to attribute it to him, though, since it's very much a part of "Peter Welbeck's" screenplay. Nevertheless, the linkage of sex and death is a guiding principle in Franco's work, from the seductive *MISS MUERTE* (1965), who kills with curare-soaked fingernails, to Lina Romay's *FEMALE VAMPIRE* (1973), who literally kills via oral sex. Apart from the pleasingly perverse notion of the kiss, *THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU* comes across not so much as a Sax Rohmer adventure as it does a remake of Mario Bava's worst film, *DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE GIRL BOMBS* (1966). Now there's a picture that makes *THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU* look good!

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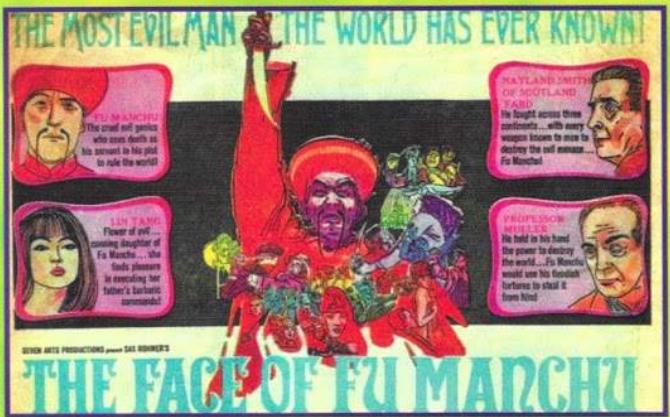
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THE FACE OF FU MANCHU

Towers took full advantage of Franco's speed and maximized the length of his contract. Their collaborations enabled the director to work with such fine actors as Christopher Lee, George Sanders, Leo Genn, Klaus Kinski, Jack Palance, and Dennis Price, whose presence ensured worldwide distribution. Revered by some, damned by others, Franco seemed an ideal choice to explore the exotic nature of Rohmer's universe. Sadly, though, he proved either unwilling or unable to meet the challenge.

THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU isn't a total disaster, but it clearly pales in comparison to its predecessors. Cinematographer Manuel Merino, who shot many films for Franco, here seems to be trying to emulate the color-drenched aesthetic of Mario Bava, but the end result is gaudy instead of seductive. The locales are bland. Production values haven't reached rock bottom just yet (that would come with the next and last film in the series), but they're certainly low. And all sense of adventure and intrigue is curiously absent. At his best on BLOOD, Franco manages a competent B-grade action film; at his worst, he seems a rank amateur.

If nothing else, BLOOD gives Christopher Lee some opportunities to shine as the Yellow Peril, and he plays the character with some degree of enthusiasm. (Franco's subsequent CASTLE OF FU MANCHU contains so little screen time for the actor that he might as well have been credited as guest star.) Series regulars Tsai Chin and Howard Marion Crawford are reliable as always, and Maria Rohm (Mrs. Harry Alan Towers) is certainly fetching as the damsel in distress. (Her best role came in another Franco film in 1968, the marvelous VENUS IN FURS). Guest star Shirley Eaton (best known for being painted gold from head to toe in 1964's GOLDFINGER) is sometimes credited with playing a larger role, that of the girl who blinds Nayland Smith, but in fact she appears in some rather pointless footage consisting of outtakes from SUMURU, the shooting of which overlapped with this production. (It's possible that her role was more substantial in one of the European cuts of the film. Several different running times are listed, and it's rare when a Franco film exists in one comprehensive edition.) Eaton has said that her very brief appearance—she's billed with Richard Greene as "Guest Star"—was done without her knowledge or consent, supposedly as part of SUMURU. Franco played a similar trick on Howard Vernon during the filming of SUCCUBUS, and the actor was so furious that he threatened to sue; soon after, Vernon became an essentially permanent fixture in Franco's films."

Richard Greene had been a leading man in the thirties and forties (among his credits is the role of Sir Henry Baskerville in the 1939 version of THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES), before finding his greatest success as Robin Hood on TV in the fifties. He's no more than competent as Nayland Smith, unfortunately, lacking the thoughtfulness of Douglas Wilmer and the energy of Nigel Green. He doesn't get much of a chance to shine, though, since his screen time is fairly short.

Colorful and enjoyable as much of the film is, the climax is nothing short of disastrous. Whatever his skills as a director, Jess Franco proves to have no skill whatever when it comes to action. (The same can be said for the action scenes in SUMURU.) Still, the whole concept of a kiss of death is perversely satisfying (one of the film's several alternate titles, in fact, is KISS AND KILL), and is perhaps the one idea that reveals the personality of BLOOD's director. It would be wrong to attribute it to him, though, since it's very much a part of "Peter Welbeck's" screenplay. Nevertheless, the linkage of sex and death is a guiding principle in Franco's work, from the seductive MISS MUERTE (1965), who kills with curare-soaked fingernails, to Lina Romay's FEMALE VAMPIRE (1973), who literally kills via oral sex. Apart from the pleasingly perverse notion of the kiss, THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU comes across not so much as a Sax Rohmer adventure as it does a remake of Mario Bava's worst film, DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE GIRL BOMBS (1966). Now there's a picture that makes THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU look good!

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SS: A Lee/Fisher series of Holmes adventures could have been spectacular.

CL: It goes into the file of "could have been" and that's all that can be said about it. The next picture that started to change the direction of my career was *THE WICKER MAN*. There was a lot of wit and humor in that film. It's the best picture I've ever been in, in my opinion.

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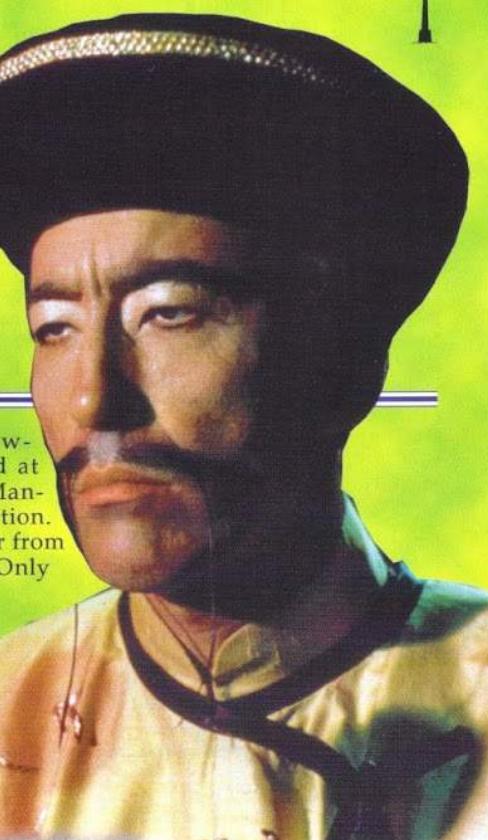


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THE TOWERS OF FU MANCHU

Continued from page 72

absent for most of the film, with Lin Tang (Tsai Chin, one last time) moving closer to the center stage of pulp villainy. She acquits herself well, though the screenplay and direction aren't worthy of her talents. Howard Marion-Crawford is on hand again as Dr. Petrie, and appears quite ill. The actor died the same year, *CASTLE* being his next-to-last foray before the cameras. (The last was 1969's *AVANCHE*, which shouldn't be confused with the slightly better-known film of 1978.) Richard Greene returns as Nayland Smith, and he's neither better nor worse than he had been the first time around.

Harry Alan Towers has announced at least one new *Fu Manchu* film for production. Shall the world hear from *Fu manchu* again? Only time will tell . . .

SCREEN & SCREEN

Continued from page 67

appearances in the horror, sci-fi, and fantasy film genres. The show is very nicely paced and loaded with many interesting stories about Hollywood's Golden Age told through the eyes of Price. Hearing his personal opinions about his work is delightful, and the legendary bogeyman shares many great stories about his co-stars as well. Del Valle's extensive knowledge about Price's work is perfectly matched by the star's own enthusiasm as a film fan, enhancing the already positive chemistry and mutual respect between these two gentlemen.

The DVD's main menu is divided into chapters in which a specific stop represents discussion of a particular Price genre film. Some of Price's comments



about his films are guaranteed to get a chuckle. Two of the funniest for this writer are reserved for THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES and GREEN HELL (both 1940). Directed by James Whale, GREEN HELL is considered the worst film ever helmed by one of the finest directors of all time. One scene finds actress Joan Bennett, lost in the jungle, unconscious and looking every inch the glamorous Hollywood star. A physician leans over Bennett's limp body with the line "Don't worry, it's just a coma." With a smile, Price retorts, "Just a coma! We should all look so good in a coma!" Some of Price's more interesting stories about his contemporaries are reserved for the likes of the gentle Boris Karloff, the extremely sensitive Basil Rathbone, and self-confessed "facemaker," the brilliant Peter Lorre.

All Day Entertainment gives us our money's worth with this compilation of Vincent Price goodies. As if the interview isn't enough, the bonus materials are a unique potpourri of Price items reflecting other avenues of Price's work. A SHINDIG! special from 1965 entitled THE WILD WEIRD WORLD OF DR. GOLDFOOT was meant to publicize Price's AIP release DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE BIKINI MACHINE. The cast includes such familiar AIP faces as Harvey Lembeck, Susan Hart, Aron Kincaid, Tommy Kirk, and a bunch of swinging' guys and gals doing the occasional shake and shimmy dance numbers. A second TV show on the DVD is the equally rare and offbeat episode "Freedom to Get Lost" from the

short-lived series HALF HOUR TO KILL (1958). An example of Price's radio work is represented with a 1950 episode of ESCAPE titled "Three Skeleton Key." Following ESCAPE, another Del Valle/Price collaboration is presented in the form of an audio interview conducted with the actor in 1988. It's a nice companion piece to the SINISTER IMAGE interview and often touches on topics not discussed in the on-camera interview. Rounding off the bonus material selections is an incredible photo gallery featuring images of Price throughout his career, courtesy of the Del Valle Archive. For the Price fan who just can't get enough, there's a marvelous hidden Easter egg that can be accessed quite easily.

VINCENT PRICE: THE SINISTER IMAGE not only serves as a valentine to the actor, but it will prove to be a wonderful research tool for future film researchers who want to learn more about one of the most unique and beloved actors of film.

—JoAnna Wioskowsky

THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL Image Entertainment

\$24.99

Anyone looking for the naked truth on Special Edition DVDs need look no further than Image's 26th Anniversary Edition of THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL (1976). In addition to the cult classic, written, directed, and composed by Bruce Kimmel, film fans will find three audio commentaries, a retrospective original documentary about said film, the film's original trailer, a self-playing photo gallery, and (on a bonus compact disc, limited to the initial pressing of 8,000 copies) the original soundtrack recording, with additional tracks featuring the soundtrack for the DVD's documentary! Yes, those folks at Image have gone the full monty for this charming but never lewd musical look at the fringe business of pornography circa 1976. The film itself is presented for the first time on home video in its original theatrical aspect ratio (1.78:1) in a spiffy transfer enhanced for widescreen viewing. Personally supervised by the director, the transfer corrects some inaccurate framing and has been color corrected to near-perfection. Some very minor print



damage does not distract from the joy of the film itself.

THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL follows the goings on at a nearly defunct movie

studio. In order to save Schecter Studios from the wrecking ball's revenge, Harry Schecter (Stephen Nathan) promises to deliver the first pornographic musical to his investors in a short two-week shooting period. Inspired and guided by his faithful, loving secretary, Rosie (Cindy Williams, in a delightful performance), Schecter takes on the insurmountable task of fulfilling his promise, even though his investors, hoping to scuttle the project, have saddled him with a neophyte director. Young John Smithee as played by Bruce Kimmel is the film's *raison d'être*. It's a classic performance inspired by the physicality of past screen clowns, from Buster Keaton to Peter Sellers. Somewhat surprisingly, given his musical expertise, Kimmel is the only one of the starring trio not to sing a song (though he croons one Manilow style over the film's final credits).

Kimmel's score provides a series of endless delights, whether celebrating the joys of "Perversion" (sung to the hilt by Diana Canova, the daughter of country comedienne Judy) or finalizing things with a jaunty "Let 'Em Eat Cake (but Let Me Eat You)." The laughs are hearty, making this film the only classic of its kind. Accept no substitutes—THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL is the real thing!

—Anthony Dale

THE ALIEN FACTOR Retromedia Entertainment

\$19.98

Last issue, Scarlet Street reviewed Don Dohler's latest film, HARVESTERS (2002). Now, thanks to Retromedia, Dohler's first effort, THE ALIEN FACTOR (1978), is available on DVD.

Return with us to the thrilling days when regional filmmakers were able to get (limited) theatrical release for their films. For a ridiculously low sum (under \$20,000) Dohler shot THE ALIEN FACTOR on 16mm stock and filled it with special effects, including opticals, stop motion, and several original monster suits. The plot, a tribute to fifties sci-fiers, concerns a spaceship that crashes in a small town called Perry Hall, Maryland. The monstrous zoo specimens within the ship are released, and immediately set about causing havoc and death. Meanwhile, Sheriff Cinder (Tom Griffith), who is failing miserably to get the situation under control, meets the mysterious Benjamin Zacherly (Don Leifert), who is supposedly looking for a downed meteorite but seems to know more about what's going on than anyone else.

Retromedia's DVD is taken from a 16mm master. Compared to the long out of print video release from the early eighties, it's definitely sharper and less grainy. Adding to the fun is a new intro by Fred Olen Ray and his wife, Miss Kim; a blooper reel; a still gallery, a picture gallery tribute to A MAN CALLED STOVER (cult actor George Stover), and some unused stop-motion creature footage.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

MAURY CHAYKIN

Continued from page 33

certain time, lunches at a certain time, dines at a certain time—and, of course, everything in the outside world threatens to upset this rhythm and this carefully planned life.

SS: There's a certain irony in that the profession that makes his lifestyle possible also makes such demands on it.

MC: Wolfe is trying to do the impossible, and of course it never works. His order is being constantly threatened by the outside world.

SS: The books suggest—even more than suggest—that Wolfe follows such a set routine in the brownstone because of considerable turmoil in his past, when he was a young man in Montenegro.

MC: Some of the novels, like the one we did last year when his adopted daughter comes to New York [*OVER MY DEAD BODY*], touch on some surprising scenes, such as when Wolfe reveals to his daughter things about his experiences in wartime. When we did that story, I was really determined for it not to come out in a very emotional way, but in a very matter-of-fact way, with the emotion underneath. It's odd for him to even speak of it. I recall a scene where he talks to an FBI agent in a very restrained way, but he's spilling his guts to a stranger. He rationalizes it in that he sees the agent as the representative of an organization, which makes it okay for him to talk about his past. (Laughs) Very odd. A quote I found interesting in *Over My Dead Body* is when he talks about his weight, and that he keeps the weight on to insulate his feelings. That's an amazing thing to say, an amazing confession for him!

SS: How useful is it to you as an actor, to know that particular self-revelation about Nero Wolfe?

MC: A lot of the background and the emotions and behavior are intuited by me, naturally, as a perceptive artist playing a role. He's a very intense person. It's not necessarily the result of extraordinary circumstances, but what happens inside of him—his reaction to life is extraordinary, I think. The specifics of it are almost irrelevant. There are all kinds of theories about where he was, and what he did, and that he was a war hero, and he saw combat. Well, that's all very interesting, but the reality of it is that it's all purposely conjecture, purposely mysterious. So why try to get to the bottom of it? For the audience to do that, that's okay—but for me to actually discover for myself what exactly Wolfe went through, that's not necessary.

SS: What do you find most difficult and easiest to play about Wolfe?

MC: The easiest to play is Wolfe's impatience with people. It's easy to be impatient. His intolerance of stupidity, of mediocrity in work, and his thoroughness—those are things that are easy for me because they're all horrible traits. (Laughs) The most difficult part for me was, initially, the baroque quality of the language that he speaks. It's indirect in a way, but sometimes it's very direct. The

words that he uses, for instance. Just yesterday I called a woman a "lamia." The words were "harpy or a lamia." "Lamia" means a man-eating creature who has the breasts and head of a woman and the body of a serpent. (Laughs)

SS: Since Wolfe is an unchanging and unmoving character—like Mycroft Holmes, he "has his rails and he runs on them"—how do you keep the experience of playing him fresh?

MC: I do that by finding his sense of humor, what he thinks is amusing. It's sometimes difficult to do reading the novels. Often, it's not really in the script or it has to do with something that's not scripted. Also, I do it by finding out how far his passion goes. Sometimes his coldness is alarming and fascinating; he's immune to feeling and he particularly finds women's emotions extremely distasteful and uncomfortable. Keeping it fresh also has to with allowing my own personality to enter into him—rather than just portraying a character, I allow more of my own reactions. In some ways, I'm not dissimilar to Wolfe; that's why I feel a lot more comfortable in the character now. Tim Hutton is always very stimulating to work with, and the other remarkable aspect of the series is that we have a unique situation with our cast. We have a true repertory company, where the actors play different characters in each episode. We draw our actors from the Toronto acting pool and also from New York and Los Angeles. For 30 years, I've been playing in my own kind of repertory company. In the 110 movies or so that I've done, I've played different characters, so I'm extremely familiar with the process of doing that. I'm in admiration of all these fine actors on *NERO WOLFE*. Every week I get to watch their different interpretations, with different wigs and prosthetics. I get jealous, too. We were talking about next season, where I might play another character in a smaller part. I'm just dying to get an opportunity to do that!

SS: Do you like the episodes in which Wolfe gets out of the brownstone?

MC: Oh, I love them! This year there has been quite a lot of that. One of my favorite episodes is where Wolfe goes out to find a replacement for Horstmann [*DOOR TO DEATH*]. It was really the first one of the season where Wolfe got to go out and be the fish out of water. You get to see how really neurotic he is. In his brownstone, he has neuroses, but he's king; he's under control to some extent. But when he goes out, he's at the mercy of the elements. His worst fear is getting into a car accident. He considers cars to be death traps.

SS: When A&E said they wanted to do *NERO WOLFE* as a regular series, and not just produce several two-hour TV movies, what was your reaction?

MC: Fear! (Laughs) Fear, and then subsiding fear, and then taking a leap. The first year was wrought with fear. We didn't know how long it would take to do these shows properly. We had scheduled a certain amount of time, but it clearly wasn't enough, and it was really tough—especially the amount of dialogue. In *THE GOLDEN SPIDERS*, there was one scene

that was enormous! It was the denouement, when Wolfe calls all the suspects in and gives his 11-page monologue. I had time to learn that, although the content of the monologue was constantly changing, because everyone was so busy with everything else and the writer [Paul Monash] was not available to us. When we finally nailed it down, two days before I did it, I knew it pretty well. But it's a different story when you're doing a two-hour episode every two weeks and you're finishing an episode one day and starting a new one the next. We have no rehearsal at all. The rehearsal is done with the blocking on set. It's basically just going through the scenes a couple of times for the crew, so we know where the camera is going to be. The crew works, on the average, a 15, 18-hour day.

SS: Although you haven't read every Rex Stout novel, do you usually read the book or short story that a specific show is based upon before filming begins?

MC: If I have time to do it, yes. Sometimes what I'll do is I'll get the novel, and if I see a scene that I'm not happy with, I'll look for that scene in the novel and see what is most valuable, and try to enrich the scene with little tidbits from the novel. I'm starting to read *In the Best Families*. We're talking about doing it as a movie, and having it be the first episode of next season.

SS: That's the famous one where Wolfe loses 130 pounds.

MC: We're discussing that and figuring out if and how that can be done. It's an exciting thought to do that one.

SS: How do you like wearing Wolfe's elegant suits?

MC: I enjoy it. It's not my style at all, but I like them. The suits are beautiful. We have an amazing wardrobe designer, Chris Hargadon. I have about 10 suits that have been custom made for me out of beautiful materials.

SS: Overall, how would you describe the experience of playing Nero Wolfe?

MC: It's been an amazing and intense experience, simply because I'm not used to the pace of doing a series. I think our initial intent—Tim and myself, when we discussed doing this together—was to do a few two-hour movies, or maybe three two-hour movies a year, and to do them properly, in 23 days. Well, here we are, doing 16 hours this year on eight-day schedules. That's the business of television, which dictates that we need as many episodes as possible to deliver. It's an isolating experience, too, because we shoot in a suburb north of Toronto in a warehouse. We have virtually no response all year until the shows come out, and by then we're off doing other things. It's strange in that way, but in the meantime we have a wonderful crew, some very good writers, and we have people at A&E who are supporting the show. It's fun to do. You create a family when you do a series, and especially when you're working this intensely. It's a whirlwind and mindboggling, but with moments of fun and satisfaction. It's a family affair.

MIRACLE ON 35TH STREET

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matic cues. I need tongue-in-cheek stuff, music that's going to match the tone and style. We're not trying to set the world on fire, we're not trying to tell people how to run their lives or tell people at some realistic level what's important—we're in the business of giving people, in as true a fashion as we can, this set of characters in this time and place."

If a stylized, period series based solely on books wasn't enough to separate *NERO WOLFE* from other TV shows, Jaffe decided to employ a returning repertory cast in the guest roles for each episode. He felt that it was necessary to find actors who understood and fit in with the show's unique approach. "Every other show agonizes about casting," Jaffe says. "We don't. We have 20, 30 people in our repertory company and we get great actors to play bit roles. You can see George Plimpton, James Tolkan, Debra Monk, Ron Rifkin, Kari Matchett, and others. We found an enormous number of very talented actors in Canada." Besides the repertory cast, the show features well-known guest stars. "For the second season, we have Carrie Fisher, Griffin Dunne, and Penelope Ann Miller in guest roles," Jaffe notes. "Most of these people are Tim's buddies. He brings everybody in."

Jaffe, who normally is not a writer, chose to write the first season's opening episode, *THE DOORBELL RANG*, because he loved the book. "I was frustrated with the way the adaptation work had been done, and decided to take a shot at doing it myself. It's always hard to choose stories, but for the second season we chose what may be one of those two or three best novels, *The Silent Speaker*. I, of course, being boss, got to write that one myself, and I'll be directing it, so the second year has been a really great year for me."

Transforming Stout into scripts involves a great deal of taking away—and sometimes inventing a scene not in the original. Sharon Doyle, who writes many of the scripts as well as overseeing the work of freelancers, reads the assigned book a few times, then turns the entire book into a screenplay. She then keeps paring down the first draft screenplay until it meets time and budget requirements. "I do the most work on the dialogue," she says. "What Stout writes actually sounds good when you say it out loud, but the stuff that makes you laugh out loud and fall on the floor in the books doesn't work most of the time when you transpose it directly to actors' mouths. Frequently I end up moving words—tenderly and respectfully—but retaining as much as the language as possible. I feel a great belief in Rex Stout. I see the script process as writing his second draft. Stout used to say that when he wrote, somebody would suddenly walk into Wolfe's office and announce, for example, that she was his daughter, and he, Stout, would have to deal with it. He had a completely open creative process. In a first draft, these nuggets of gold may crop up, although you can't always pay them off. I try to be true to Stout, but I'm also trying to polish some of the themes that bubble up."

Much of the fun for Doyle comes in fleshing out scenes that are covered in a mere sentence in the original. "In *POISON A LA CARTE*, Archie says, 'We'd all been hauled down to the police station all night.' The idea of seeing Wolfe in the police station, being questioned—that was too tempting not to write. And to see all those Aristologists [a society of gourmands] wandering around the police station at 3AM—that's something you have to sit down and write."

Two first-season episodes, *EENY MEENY MURDER MO* and *DISGUISE FOR MURDER*, began with newly-invented scenes of Archie playing poker with Saul, Orrie, and Fred. "These poker scenes were put in for marketing reasons," Jaffe explains. "*NERO WOLFE* airs as a two-hour show overseas and the two episodes had to be tied together. So we looked for ways to do that. We've heard Archie talk about poker a million times. So there was nothing abnormal about seeing them play poker, except that we don't see them do it in the book. Another example: at the end of *THE GOLDEN SPIDERS*, there's a scene with Archie and the mother of the murdered boy, and Archie says, 'Here's an envelope. Don't open it now. It's half the fee, because Pete and Mr. Wolfe were partners.' Mrs. Drossos starts crying. It's an enormously pathetic scene, and it worked gangbusters. It's not in the book. Most people say, 'It's not?' In the book, Wolfe tells Pete, 'Okay, we're partners now,' but there's no scene where Archie gives Pete's mother the money. I felt that was a legitimate extension. Also, the books refer to Wolfe having lunch at Rusterman's, and there are some books where you actually see that, but in *CHRISTMAS STORY* we have him lunching at Rusterman's, although he only refers to it in the story. We did it there because it was the only way to effect a transition within the story. So we do add scenes every now and then, but only based on things that Wolfe and Archie imagine or say."

Stout's complicated story lines are sometimes a problem, according to Jaffe. "The plots are sometimes incredibly arcane and they turn on things that make you say, 'Oh, well, okay, so if that's true, then this is true.' If somebody says, 'Well, I don't understand this plot,' and you find you have to explain that, then you have to explain other things, and you get into an endless cacophony of explanations. The answer is not to explain it at all, but to throw it out. A good example is in *THE SILENT SPEAKER*. There's an eight-page scene with a man named John Smith, whose name is obviously an alias. Smith tries to bribe Wolfe

to manufacture evidence that someone killed Cheney Boone. I couldn't figure out how to tie it into an already long book, so I deleted it. Nobody misses it. You read it and you'll forget that it was in the original novel."

The first season was a learning process, Jaffe says, and for the second season the producers are experimenting with new techniques. "We're trying to be a little more fluid this year and a little more creative in our filmmaking. The camera's clearly moving a little more to help with the static nature of our sets. In *THE MOTHER HUNT*, three potential murderers are in Wolfe's office and each of them are saying why they wouldn't have ever killed Carol Marders. It's one guy's turn and he speaks, and then the next guy and then the next guy. It can end up being kind of stiff. So we had the camera moving in a slow circle around each one as they spoke, and instead of showing one guy with a static camera, then cutting to the next guy, we took one line from the first guy and dissolved the line to the next guy and so on. We intercut those lines, not in any particular order necessarily, but just as a description of their relationship with Carol Marders. It's a much more cinematic way of telling the story.

The second season has also shifted filming with 35mm to shooting on high-definition digital tape. Jaffe is delighted with the results, although he had to convince Hutton, who had reservations about using digital cameras. "Tim's a technophile," he says, "and we did a bunch of camera tests, and went back and tested different equipment. Now Tim—I think it's fair to say—loves the equipment and loves the





Pete Drossos (Robert Clark) brought the mystery of THE GOLDEN SPIDERS (2000) to Archie Goodwin (Tim Hutton) and Nero Wolfe, launching the A&E teleseries.

look. It looks extraordinary! Because of the nature of the material we're doing, we often have seven, eight, nine actors in a scene, and we have to do a take on every single one of them. A normal two-hour film for a series shoots maybe 5,000 to 7,000 feet a day. At 50 cents a foot, if you shoot 5,000 feet, it's \$2,500. If you're shooting 12,000 up to 25,000 feet a day, the number becomes enormous! We were spending \$40,000-plus just on film stock a week! Multiply that same number of feet by the cost of developing it, which is another \$15,000. With HDTV, all of that goes away. As an archival medium, it's better than film anyway. You just put it on a chip and there it is. It's stored for 100 years. Also, every time you have to reload a camera and put a 1,000-foot magazine on it, it takes five minutes. We were doing that 12, 14 times a day and that would add up to an hour, which is 10 percent of our daily schedule. Now we have that time back, because with an HDTV camera, we put a new tape in maybe once or twice a day and it takes 10 seconds."

Jaffe is looking forward to a possible third season of NERO WOLFE, tentatively planning to kick it off with a feature film version of one of his favorite novels, *In the Best Families*. Jaffe is a great fan of the "Zeck trilogy," in which Wolfe faces off with his own version of Professor James Moriarty, crime boss Arnold Zeck. A major obstacle to filming the book is dealing with Wolfe's drastic measures to conceal his presence from Zeck, resulting in a startling change of appearance. "My hope has always been to do all three of the Zeck stories," he says, enthusing over such dramatic fare as Zeck's ordering of assaults on the brownstone with a bomb and a machine gun that blows Wolfe's rooftop greenhouse to smithereens. Jaffe is even contemplating filming *In the Best Families* as a theatrical release, if ratings remain strong.

Satisfactory, as Wolfe himself would say . . .



MEET NERO WOLFE

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clever. It's workable. What makes it grating is the intrusion of the irritating Mazie, who has no place in Wolfe's world.

When we actually meet Wolfe, we find ourselves faced with the physically appropriate Edward Arnold. At first, it's not a bad portrayal, and it indicates a level of commitment to the project on the part of Columbia. In 1936, Arnold was more than a top-rung supporting actor. Universal had made him something of a star, giving him the lead in such pictures as Kurt Neumann's SECRET OF THE BLUE ROOM (1933), James Whale's REMEMBER LAST NIGHT? (1935), Frank Tuttle's THE GLASS KEY (1935), and Edward Suther-

land's DIAMOND JIM (1935). Columbia had costarred him with Peter Lorre in their prestige-bid Josef von Sternberg film of CRIME AND PUNISHMENT (1935). At the time of MEET NERO WOLFE, Arnold was a pretty major player. (The roof wouldn't fall in on his star status till the disastrous box-office of James Cruze's SUTTER'S GOLD that year.) It's too bad that no one involved seemed to grasp just what to have him do.

Arnold's Wolfe starts out on something approaching the right note, badgering Archie to find the missing Maria Maringola (Rita Hayworth in her Rita Cansino phase). "There are only six million people in New York. It isn't as if she were anywhere in the United States." It's a perfectly acceptable bit of Wolfean outrageousness—especially, since it's grounded in her abilities at brewing beer. It's also a neat bit of scripting to have Archie announce, "I guarantee that Maria Maringola is nowhere in the city," only to have her show up at that exact moment. Here the plot kicks in, faithfully following *Fer De Lance* with Wolfe being engaged by Maria to find her missing brother and quickly piecing things together from a missing piece of newspaper and Carlo's background. "Carlo didn't just disappear, he died, and he didn't just die, he was murdered," Wolfe matter-of-factly tells Archie, and further informs him of the reality of the fate of Professor Barstow—"Oh, that poor fellow didn't just drop dead. He was murdered, too."

The film also makes appropriate use of Wolfe's fondness for money. He's happy to just drop the information about the murders into the laps of the police and be done with it—at least until Barstow's widow (Nana Bryant) offers a reward for the capture of her husband's killer. At that point, he becomes actively involved in the case.

What goes wrong—at least from a purist's standpoint—is the decision to portray Wolfe as a far too jolly character. This is odd in itself, since Arnold was rarely an actor who specialized in projecting good humor. Frank Capra, who cast Arnold in several films, wrote in his autobiography that "Arnold had the presence and power of a J. P. Morgan. He could be unctuous as a funeral director, or as cold and ruthless as a Cosa Nostra chief." Capra singled out Arnold's laugh—"he had a laugh as unique and as phony as a three-dollar bill." For some inexplicable reason, Arnold milks that three-dollar laugh for all it's worth in MEET NERO WOLFE. The results are Nero Wolfe as Santa Claus—and a patently bogus Santa Claus at that.

It's not that there aren't good things in MEET NERO WOLFE. The movie cleverly includes a scene from the novel in which Wolfe figures out the murder method by watching a golf demonstration (even though it hands the demonstration over to Archie rather than the book's golfing specialist), which includes a priceless exchange about Wolfe's waistline. ("It's an imaginary line like the equator!" he barks when Archie questions Wolfe's claim of having one.) The movie also neatly reproduces the scene in which Wolfe learns from the golf caddies that the wrong man was killed. Nevertheless, the film doesn't quite get it right, and gets it really wrong with Mazie—who Wolfe even kisses at one point! The relationship between Wolfe and Archie is slightly offkey, and by the end of the film—when Wolfe gives Archie and Mazie a honeymoon cruise with a sleuthing job thrown in—it almost seems we've wandered into a production of THE FRONT PAGE.

Judging the film as a film and dismissing questions of fidelity to the source material, MEET NERO WOLFE is an above average minor A picture, a solid mystery, and unfailingly entertaining. Certain things—such as a sequence involving Archie playing the then new game of Monopoly—have a nice time capsule quality that has nothing to do with the Wolfe books, but have a value all their own. No, at bottom, it's not Rex Stout's Nero and Archie, but it's a well-developed mystery (thanks to Stout's plot) with compensations all its own—and an interesting piece of Wolfeana.



TIMOTHY HUTTON

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books, and he knows them better than any of us. It starts with Michael. My involvement on a producing level really just consists of trying to maintain what it is that the books are about. Casting and things like that.

SS: *It must be quite a balancing act to act and direct at the same time.*

TH: It's not a lot of fun most of the time, because you'd really like to be just concentrating on one thing. But then again, being able to be much more a part of the storytelling is what the director part brings. It's a matter of managing one's day and figuring out what's needed to be prepared—obvious things, like dialogue learned on the acting side, and on the directing side, knowing how you want to approach shooting a scene. Once you have those things pretty well figured out, then the day goes by okay.

SS: *Is there one particular scene that just went exactly the way you wanted to do it? Are their moments that really stand out?*

TH: Well, any time you approach a scene, your goal has to be exactly that. You need to walk away from it and say, "That's exactly how I imagined it." If you walk away feeling like it's not quite how you imagined it, or it didn't turn out the way it should have, then that's nobody's fault but your own, because you have everything in place. You have a set, you have costumes, you have actors, and you have a camera, so you should always walk away having that feeling.

SS: *Let's talk about Archie Goodwin and Nero Wolfe, the characters.*

TH: When Maury Chaykin and I first started last year, we worked well together from day one. So, it was in a pretty good place to begin, and now it's just become more comfortable. The behavior of these two people in a room is just very, very easy, loose—so, it's fortunate that that it's turned out that way.

SS: *One of the most distinctive elements of this series is the writing. It has clipped, snappy, crisp dialogue.*

TH: Well, the dialogue comes from the books. Except for a few places, none of it's invented, it's all just lifted right from the books. The adaptations are pretty straightforward. A movie like *HIS GIRL FRIDAY* or *THE THIN MAN*, Preston Sturges movies, *DINNER AT EIGHT*—there's a style to those movies where the dialogue is very rhythmic, unsentimental. Nobody takes these long, realistic, emotional pauses; there isn't a lot of contemplating going on. Under other circumstances, someone might find a certain passage to be extremely difficult to say, but not in *NERO WOLFE*. It all has to have a certain rhythm to it, so that it becomes musical and people don't get bogged into naturalism.

SS: *It's a rarity for Wolfe to leave home.*

TH: In a couple of the books, Wolfe does leave the brownstone. He's either forced to, or he decides that he needs to in some way. A great orchid expert might be available to come work for him, so he writes him a letter, doesn't get a letter

back, so he decides to visit him. They're interesting stories, because most of the time Wolfe is inside.

SS: *There's also the story in which Wolfe steps out to see whether Archie intends to marry.*

TH: Yeah, Wolfe finds out from Archie that he's going to be getting married. This is terrible news to Wolfe, because it may mean that Archie will move away or settle down somewhere else. In many ways, Wolfe and Archie have a sort of marriage, especially from Wolfe's point of view. I mean, Archie does everything for this guy.

SS: *What can you tell us about the overall look of the series?*

TH: It's great being involved in the design of the costumes, the overall concept of the production design, the sets. We all get together and talk about it. One book might have a certain theme or concept and it gets honed in, or some of it can come from our appreciation of a specific movie from the forties or fifties. Sometimes it's just about what looks good! (Laughs) The worst thing is to let those details go and get general about it, so everyone's very careful to make sure that those elements are really thought out.

SS: *How do you pick and choose which episodes you're going to adapt?*

TH: Some books just lend themselves to being translated to film. All of them do, really, but some more so than others.

SS: *Archie Goodwin is an established Rex Stout character. As an actor and director, do you take liberties with that characterization?*

TH: These books are so well written and the characters are so well drawn. Wolfe is Wolfe, Archie's Archie—and all the other characters are very specific as well. The great thing about them is that there's a wide range you can cover within the parameters of what's been established by Rex Stout, but going beyond that is probably not appropriate, and would be a big mistake. It is what it is, and should remain so.

BILL SMITROVICH

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BS: Between him and Wolfe, and with Archie as well. He thinks Archie is this dandy who runs around and has all the trappings at his fingertips. He can do this and that and wow the girls, and has all the time in the world to solve a crime, since he doesn't have to do anything else. He can pick and choose what he decides to do. It's the same with Wolfe; he can do anything he wants. If he doesn't want the client, he doesn't have to take him. Cramer is envious because he doesn't get to pick and choose. I'm playing a prosecutor, a D.A., on *THE PRACTICE* now, and his relationship with defense lawyers is similar in that they can pick their own clients. Unfortunately, prosecutors don't get a chance to pick their witnesses or their clients. Their clients are picked for them because they're victims of the crime. Both D.A. Walsh on *THE PRACTICE* and Cramer share a desire to see justice done. With the fun and banter and style that we have on *NERO WOLFE*, I hope people

don't perceive Cramer as a buffoon, because he's not. We have a lot of fun with Cramer, but we always see him when he is absolutely frustrated, at his wits' end and ready to boil over.

SS: *It must be difficult trying to keep him human and not turn him into a caricature.*

BS: That's right. You're not going to see him at home having dinner with his wife. You're not going to see him doing the things that he might love to do. You're not going to find out what his likes and dislikes are, or what his dreams are. He's a foil, for better or worse. You're always seeing Cramer at the height of his frustration, and even desperation at times. Once in a while he gets the plum, but not very often.

SS: *Wouldn't you say he also has a lot of respect for Nero Wolfe and Archie?*

BS: He has a lot of respect for them, but frustration clouds that respect. Wolfe and Goodwin sometimes treat him with disrespect and that gets to Cramer. His frustration is increased by Wolfe's reluctance to share information until it's too late for him to act on it, or when Wolfe won't give him any insight into how or what he thinks, until he's ready to tell him. Sure, Cramer has great admiration for Wolfe and probably says so. If anybody said anything bad about Wolfe, Cramer would be one of the first people to say, 'Why don't you just shut up? You don't know what you're talking about.' But Cramer is very reluctant to show that admiration to Wolfe face to face.

SS: *It must be difficult to do two shows at once, since they're on different coasts.*

BS: Exhausted! (Laughs) I try to get as much sleep as I can, and I try to learn my lines. That's basically my day. I play two very different characters, and *NERO WOLFE* and *THE PRACTICE* have two very different writing styles. I haven't had two shows at the same time with two very demanding characters in a while. My wife and children are very helpful and supportive. Taking those long plane trips from Los Angeles to Toronto gives me time to investigate a little bit more, to study what I'm doing, to read the books, to learn the lines and make choices, just to do my actor work. That helps. It ain't easy! But it's very rewarding to have the opportunity to play two wonderful characters for two very different shows—to work in David Kelley-land with one of the best writers on television, and do also a Michael Jaffe show. I'm a lucky man to do Rex Stout's words and David Kelley's words at the same time.

SS: *Inspector Cramer has a sidekick, too—Purley Stebbins, played by R. D. Reid.*

BS: He's my right-hand man. He's the one who knows all the ins and outs of what Cramer's doing. Purley's a good observer. He's very observant of what Cramer's up to, and since Cramer is not the most unpredictable person, Purley can predict what he's thinking. Purley has been with him long enough to know when to butt in and when to stay out of the way. It's sort of like the Cisco Kid and Pancho, Hoppy and Gabby, The Lone Ranger and Tonto. We work as a team. Much like Archie is Wolfe's legman,

Purley's mine. He's another character you're not going to find out too much about, and that's why our characters are a bit broader than Nero and Archie. R. D. Reid does a great job with Purley, and we admire each other on screen and off. The other day we were doing a scene in my office and Wolfe and Goodwin were there. I was yelling at Wolfe about something, and he was arguing with me, and I took the cigar out at one point and went to throw it. Before I even put my arm out, Purley had the wastepaper basket, holding it out for me to throw in the cigar.

SS: One of the most famous objects in the Wolfe books is Cramer's perpetually unlit, chewed-on cigar.

BS: I like the cigar a lot better now than I did in the first year, because this year I have a mock cigar. The first year was really rough, because I'm a cigar smoker, and I like to smoke them; I don't like to chew them. (Laughs) When you chew a cigar, it's like chewing tobacco; it releases a lot of juice and it's not the tastiest stuff in the world. The first year I always had a cup and a bottle of water and it was gargle, spit, clip it—but I love the look of it. It's a great prop. It's perfect for Cramer. It's so much a part of him. The mock cigar is made by the same people who make the phony sushi you see in the windows of Japanese restaurants in New York. The cigars they've made for me are the perfect size. They're very realistic and they're easier to handle.

SS: What were your favorite episodes from the first season?

BS: I liked THE DOORBELL RANG—that was our first one up—and I loved CHAMPAGNE FOR ONE. THE DOORBELL RANG has Cramer and Archie in the hotel room, Cramer getting Archie up there with a bottle of milk. That was my first day of work of the first year. It was difficult to prepare for, but once we got into it, it was a joy to do. I think it was a four and a half-page scene.

SS: It was an unusual scene, with Cramer and Archie secretly meeting in a hotel room, and Cramer breaking the rules by passing on secret police information to Archie.

BS: Tim did a wonderful job directing that. I also loved the way Tim did the dancing scenes in CHAMPAGNE FOR ONE, and the scene where all the men talks about liquor and Archie goes out and buys it. It's so well shot, really well done. I love when Wolfe goes out, like in DOOR TO DEATH, when he had to cross a stream. That was very funny.

SS: Well, it sounds like you're quite a fan of NERO WOLFE.

BS: Oh, absolutely! We're blessed to have these people on the show. There are my friends from New York—Ron Rifkin, Debra Monk, Marion Seldes, James Tolkan, and George Plimpton. And the wonderful actors from Toronto—David Schurmann, Kari Matchett, Nicky Guadagni, Robert Bockstaal. We have some of the best actors in Toronto in our repertory company. These are very, very talented actors, and frankly, I envy them, to be able to come in and play these different characters all the time. And I can't say enough about costume designer Chris

Hardegan. The wardrobe he puts on these people, the costumes he makes and finds and shops for—it's such a rich show. A newscaster, Harold Greene, came up to me one day and said, "How did you get so lucky to be on two of the smartest shows on television?" That kind of sums it up for me. I'm on two of the smartest shows on television. They're so different in substance and style, but they're so damn smart and intelligent and rich. I can't say enough about the production values of the show and how lucky I am to be in the company of such good actors.

COLIN FOX

Continued from page 36

CF: In 2000, they did the pilot and invited me in as Fritz. The Canadian producer knew me and thought that I would be a shoo-in—and fortunately, I was. I was delighted to be a part of it. Of course, we didn't know whether it would go anywhere, but it did very well. They said, "Well, we're going to continue," and so I was asked to be part of the team.

SS: What did you know about Nero Wolfe when you did THE GOLDEN SPIDERS?

CF: All I knew was that Rex Stout was a popular writer! I thought, "Well, I've got to get hold of his books." It was very difficult at first, because a lot of them had either gone out of print or weren't being carried as often on the bookshelves as, say, Agatha Christie. But once I got hold of one, I got hooked! I wanted to read more! (Laughs) My wife wanted to read more, too, so we kept digging them up. The production office helped, also. If we couldn't find a particular novel, they would make copies for us so that we could read them.

SS: Reading Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe mysteries is definitely an addictive experience.

CF: Yes, it is an addictive experience! He never goes into great specifics about Fritz in his drawing up of the character. It's really about the actions of Fritz and his relationship to the household, and you draw your own conclusions. I loved that. It gave me great leverage, and at the same time I knew exactly where Rex Stout wanted me to be, so it was very clear.

SS: Did you invent a backstory about Fritz?

CF: Yes, a bit. I love the fact that Fritz is enigmatic. We know that he's from the French part of Switzerland, where the best chefs come from, and we know that he and Wolfe met not just on the level of great cuisine. There's one book which mentions that they actually met during the war; that would be the First World War. That's a connection between Fritz and Wolfe that I haven't explored, because it's only mentioned in passing. Wolfe refers to his wartime experiences—starving, barely able to keep himself alive at one point. Perhaps Fritz was instrumental in either rescuing Wolfe, or Wolfe was instrumental in rescuing Fritz. It's only conjecture, but it's one I like to dwell on, because it creates the bond between those two.

SS: What's uppermost in your mind when you're playing Fritz?

CF: His passion for food! (Laughs) Like a true chef, he has an immense feeling for the serving arts. It is a giving art. It's an art where you lay out your work on a plate and hope that everyone enjoys the results. And it's an ephemeral, temporary art in the sense that it all disappears—happily so, if everyone is happy. But then it's gone, and because of that, it makes Fritz temperamental sometimes. He's particular, fastidious. He likes his kitchen just so and he doesn't like anyone else telling him how to run it. Of course, that's where the sparks fly between Nero Wolfe and Fritz. They're always arguing over ingredients. Fritz apparently has a massive collection of cookbooks in his room, which we haven't yet seen in the show. It's a passion with him. He's one of those people who lives for his art, for his cooking art. Outside of that, Fritz has decided that life perhaps is dangerous and devious and difficult. Perhaps he's been through enough difficult times to not be too interested in living outside of the protection of that house, the brownstone on 35th Street.

SS: Which makes him well suited to Wolfe.

CF: Fritz has a great loyalty to Wolfe, but also a great affection for Archie. He's like an uncle to Archie. He sometimes ponders Archie's womanizing with a head-shaking wonderment.

SS: Has playing Fritz inspired you to do some cooking of your own?

CF: I'm absolutely in awe of the recipes that have come out of the Nero Wolfe books. Rex Stout knew his food and knew what he enjoyed, so it's quite intimidating for a person like myself who really doesn't have any culinary talent. The production company hired a splendid food stylist, whose name is Janice Poon. She comes on the set whenever we have intricate preparations of dishes to be presented at table, or to be prepared in the kitchen, and shows me the tricks of the trade. We've also had a consultant on etiquette who has shown us the proper serving methods at table—where things are set, how things are delivered and dished out, the history, sometimes, of these practices. It's all been a great education.

SS: You often bow very low when you're serving the food. Is that one of the things they taught you to do?

CF: Actually, no. (Laughs) We're working with a high-definition, letterbox-style camera. Because of my height—I'm quite tall—it's necessary for me to come down into the frame.

SS: Have you ever seen The Nero Wolfe Cookbook?

CF: Yes, I have a copy. It's wonderful! It gives lovely insights into the characters and into the recipes. We've often joked that there should be a Fritz Brenner cooking show. It would be fun to see all these recipes dished out and made, because they're really quite amazing.

SS: What have you learned from the cookbook?

CF: What I've learned is the delicacy and timing of the cooking art. It isn't just cooking; it's preparing a meal that has to be exquisitely timed and presented, and with all the ingredients just so. I'm trying to get up the courage to try it at home.

SS: Fritz has an accent. How long did it take to find the proper accent and perfect it?

CF: I'm quite good at accents. Because Fritz is Swiss French, it wasn't too hard to find just the right tone—without making it too heavy or unintelligible, but with a little bit of the temperament that accompanies the French language.

SS: Do you enjoy the moments when you're out of the kitchen and doing something else on the show?

CF: Oh, yes! There's one called POISON A LA CARTE. Fritz is involved, inadvertently, when he's brought in as a guest chef to a millionaire's home and one of the patrons is poisoned to death. Fritz is extremely dismayed and actually becomes involved in the case. There are a couple of other stories in which Fritz gets an errand to do and goes out and becomes involved, and that's fun. Fritz is called on sometimes to hold a gun on somebody. In the scene I just did, Archie hands Fritz a gun and says, "Keep an eye on them," and so I have a couple of suspects in Wolfe's office and I have to keep an eye on them with a gun. That's a new thing for Fritz!

SS: Some of the show's funniest scenes take place when Fritz is serving food in the presence of Inspector Cramer, but Wolfe forbids him to serve Cramer.

CF: Fritz brushes him right by! We've done that a few times; there's even one time when I won't let Archie have anything. Archie tries to reach for a sandwich and I won't let him have any, because I'm mad at him. The serving of food becomes highly significant. There are all sorts of emotional things charged into it. That happens in families. What you're seeing is a kind of family in the Wolfe household. They have to get along, and sometimes tempers get frayed and people get emotional. It comes out quite often in relation to food, because everybody is very much involved in food, because of Wolfe. It's very much like a family squabble.

SS: Both Fritz and Wolfe have their own concept of perfection.

CF: The arguments between Wolfe and Fritz can be quite passionate, because they both care deeply about what they're doing—Fritz because he cares deeply about preparing food correctly, and Wolfe because he cares deeply about eating it. So they have these blowups, usually because there's something else going on. The case isn't going well, or Archie might be in danger, and that comes out in some argument about food. It has more to do with their inner feelings.

SS: The food is a buffer.

CF: That's what so marvelous about the Rex Stout novels. You're assured of the routine of the Wolfe household. Things just go on their own way, no matter what happens. Food has to be served at a certain time, the orchids have to be looked after at a certain time, and so on. It sets up all sorts of dynamics.

SS: Tim Hutton is a huge Stout fan. Have you discussed Fritz with him?

CF: Oh, we've talked a lot about Fritz. Rather than go into one long conversation, we talk about him as we come to a scene, or as we come to a moment in the script in which there's some interaction

between Archie and Fritz. That avuncular quality of Fritz towards Archie, and Archie's affection for Fritz is behind a lot of this. Also, there's a scolding quality that comes into Fritz's attitude. He sometimes gets angry because Archie is being flip or he's not paying attention to this lovely recipe that Fritz has prepared.

SS: What can you tell us about your costars?

CF: What gives the special lift to this series is that we actually like each other. Tim and Maury and I—we all enjoy each other's company. We get along because we understand the characters and we have an intuitive grasp on how to play a certain scene. Instead of just going with the lines, often we'll take a detour, just because it's so enjoyable and it will tell us more about the characters.

SS: Now that you've played Fritz for a year, has it gotten easier?

CF: Absolutely! At first I watched my P's and Q's, and was careful about Fritz in terms of not doing anything that wouldn't be accurate to the spirit of the character as Rex Stout imagined him. Now I feel confident that I'm within the realm of Rex Stout's world; I feel much more relaxed with it.

KARI MATCHETT

Continued from page 37

SS: What was it like studying at the National Theatre School of Canada?

KM: It was a great time in my life, but it was difficult leaving home and moving to Montreal. It felt like moving to a different country, because the language is different. I just spoke a bit of high school French. I wasn't fluent, and so I had a lot of challenges. But the education was unsurpassable, and while I was there, we did an exchange with The Moscow Art Theatre School. That was an incredible life experience!

SS: How did you begin working in television and film?

KM: It's something I'd always wanted to do. I loved theater, but I felt that it was not the totality of my path. I did a guest spot on KUNG FU the first time I was on TV. When I was on set, I felt, "Okay, this is where I belong." The intimacy of the medium and the fact that you can experience what the characters are going through on that intimate level, just like you would with someone in your life with whom you are close, really appealed to me. I loved that smaller tapestry woven into film. The subtleties involved are so exciting and I never stop being challenged by the work.

SS: You've done a number of science fiction shows—VIPER, POLTERGEIST, PSI FAC-TOR, FOREVER KNIGHT. Do you have an affinity for science fiction?

KM: It is the weirdest thing, because I am the biggest non-science fiction fan ever! (Laughs) I never watch it, I don't get it, I don't know why people watch it! I have no judgment, because I know many people love it, but it has never, ever been my thing.

SS: A&E's NERO WOLFE series—how did that happen for you?

KM: I was workshopping a play and got a call from my agent. NERO WOLFE had called and they wanted me to play Sarah Jaffee in the next episode [PRISONER'S BASE], which was shooting in three days. Someone had backed out at the last minute and they were scrambling. It really came out of left field; I didn't know how or why it happened. Sarah Jaffee was the first role I played last year. I just loved her! I felt like this beautiful jewel had been dropped into my lap and someone said, "Here! Here, take this!" (Laughs) I had the most glorious time shooting it. Working with Tim Hutton and Maury Chaykin was fabulous, and then they just kept offering me all these great roles!

SS: Did you know at the time that the series employed a repertory company of actors?

KM: My agent said something about it, but I had no idea that I would ever be a part of it. It's a dream job. Many times I've sat around with my actor friends and asked, "What would be the perfect job?" We decided that, if you were doing a TV show, it would be playing a different character in every episode. You'd never get stereotyped, you'd never get stuck, you'd never get bored—you'd be constantly changing personas, which is the biggest thrill for an actor. And then it happened! (Laughs) I'm a big believer in dreams coming true.

SS: Becoming so many different characters, you really get to play "dress up."

KM: Oh, I love it! I love talking with the designers about what they're imagining, and what I'm imagining, too. It's completely collaborative. Chris Hardigan, the wardrobe designer, is brilliant. He presents things to me and rarely do I say, "No!" (Laughs) If I ever have an issue with something, which I do from time to time, he's been really receptive. Same with the makeup and the wig designers.

SS: How familiar were you with the Wolfe books when you began work on the show?

KM: My father-in-law and my stepfather were big fans, so I'd heard about them, but I'd never read them. They filled me in on all the details, so I knew there's a big, big world out there that loves Rex Stout. I've certainly gotten to know that world better since shooting NERO WOLFE. I've now read every book that's been turned into an episode.

SS: One of the characters you play is a recurring role—Lily Rowan, Archie Goodwin's wealthy and sophisticated girlfriend.

KM: I wish Lily was featured more. She's a strong woman, one of the few women who knows how to handle Archie. He's constantly flirting with and dating other women, doing God knows what, and Lily is so cool about it. She hangs out, has her own thing happening, she's rich, always looks good—I think she's one of the coolest women I've ever played!

SS: There are several novels and stories in which Lily plays a bigger role.

KM: I know there's one where Archie comes in and finds Lily kissing Nero Wolfe—I would love to do that one!

SS: You've played other important characters in the Wolfe canon—for instance, Carla Lov-

Continued on page 82

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HARRY ALAN TOWERS

Continued from page 46

based on the Jack London novel. We did it as sort of a modern-day Pirates of the Caribbean type of adventure. We're also about to revive THE BLACK MUSEUM as a television series, using Orson's voice from the old radio show. We also hope to shoot the life of Hemingway in Cuba, and we're planning a film based on the life of Byron as well. It's a new look at one of the greatest romantic figures of all time, and it will be based on the recently published biography by Phyllis Grosskurth.

SS: Did Orson Welles ever try to involve you in any of his own unfinished film projects?

HT: No. No, Orson was sensible enough to never try and involve me in any of his own unfinished projects. We were at one time going to do a documentary about him, where Orson was going to be interviewed by Wolf Mankiewicz. The name of the documentary was going to be THEY NEVER LEFT ME FINISH IT. Of course, it wasn't "they"—the "they" was "he," Orson. It was part of his character that he could only rarely complete his various projects.

SS: Are there are projects yet to be filmed that are particularly personal or especially meaningful to you?

HT: The projects that I really want to do aren't always the easiest to put together. For instance, we have a really lovely script for a story called COMMAND PERFORMANCE. It's the story of an American girl in Vienna, in 1908, when THE MERRY WIDOW had its premiere. She's a dancer, and in the summer she visits Marienbad, where she meets and entertains the King, the Kaiser, the Tsar, and Franz Lehár in this bohemian town. It's a love story, but with a very special twist. I've offered the role to Monica Lewinsky, but she says she's not really interested in becoming an actress. So we'll see what develops.

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SS: Your career has crossed paths many times over the years with the legendary Christopher Lee, who has played Dracula, Fu Manchu, and Sherlock Holmes for you as well as many other characters. Lee has often been critical of the films you've made together, yet he keeps working with you again and again.

HT: Well, we've always gotten along very well, and we've done some very successful pictures together as well as some that weren't so successful. Lee was the number-one horror star of his day, the heir to Boris Karloff. The Fu Manchu films, particularly the first one, were very good for both of us. We also tried to take the Dracula story back to Stoker's novel with COUNT DRACULA. It wasn't a perfect film, but it was all right. It had a good cast—Lee as Dracula, Herbert Lom as Van Helsing, and Klaus Kinski as Renfield—and some very effective scenes. As for the future, who knows? He's still working, and so am I. So it could happen.

SS: Do you have any memorable anecdotes about working with Christopher Lee?

HT: Oh, my, how do you even begin? (Laughs) Let's just say that it's always been interesting . . .

SS: What about Klaus Kinski? Anything you're prepared to relate?

HT: Oh, yes! Klaus Kinski was mad at me because I had paid him for a half-day's work in the version we'd made of the Marquis de Sade's JUSTINE. It starred Maria Power, who was the daughter of Tyrone Power. Jack Palance was in it, Mercedes McCambridge, Akim Tamiroff—and Klaus Kinski. He played de Sade, and he appeared at the beginning and end of the film, and occasionally throughout as he sat and wrote. He hadn't a word of dialogue; he just sat and wrote as the director, Jess Franco, zoomed around him like a fly. In other words, it was not the

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COUNT DRACULA (1970) marked an attempt to film a faithful adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel. Christopher Lee starred.

lead part. Though he was only there for half a day, though, he received top billing when it opened theatrically in Germany. So Kinski was furious with me because he was the "star" of the film, and had only received a half-day's pay! (Laughs)

SS: Kinski worked for you quite often.

HT: He didn't want to work for me at that particular time, and he didn't want to do COUNT DRACULA. So we sent him a script which had a different title. We didn't let him know that he was filming COUNT DRACULA. We were filming in Spain, and Kinski was about to strangle my wife, Maria Rohm, who was playing Mina in the picture. With his hands around her neck, he said, "You know, I think I am being double-crossed by Harry—and I am in a Dracula movie!" My wife said, "No, no, you're quite wrong! You're quite wrong!" (Laughs)

SS: You've had such a fascinating career over a very long period of time, covering radio, television, the movies—have you ever considered writing your memoirs?

HT: Actually, no, I haven't considered that—but thank you, all the same!

KARI MATCHETT

Continued from page 80

chen, Nero Wolfe's missing adopted daughter, in OVER MY DEAD BODY.

KM: She was actually the last character I played in the first season, and she was a real departure from the other ones. She was from Montenegro and had this incredible accent. At the time I was shooting *OVER MY DEAD BODY*, I was also doing a play in which I had to have an Icelandic accent. I'd go from shooting Carla Lovchen with a Montenegrin accent during the day to doing an Icelandic accent at night. It was very confusing! (Laughs) Playing Carla was fabulous, because she was a no-nonsense kind of a gal. There was so much happening on an interior level with her, because she knew that she was Nero's adopted daughter and he didn't know. Every acting choice I made was Carla sussing Nero out and looking at his life and analyzing him, deciding whether he was a good person or a bad person. It was a very rich role.

SS: You played rich girl Celia Grantham in *CHAMPAGNE FOR ONE*.

KM: The thing that struck me most about Celia was that she was a bit of a drunkard—she liked her champagne. I let that inform almost everything I did. We spent about three days dancing during the party scene. I literally spun myself like a top and let myself go. She was a no-holds-barred kind of character.

SS: Do you have any dance training?

KM: I have a little. Tim Hutton's a really good dancer, too. It was fun to dance with him. I loved how he shot that scene; I thought he did a great job.

SS: *DEATH OF A DOXY* is unique in that you play two characters—Lily Rowan and Julie Jaquette. What was it like juggling two characters in the same episode?

KM: Because I played Lily last season I had an "in" on her persona, so I didn't feel like I had to create two new people from scratch. Still, there are challenges. I had to make sure my voice was very distinctive and my choices were really clear in my own head. To be honest, it's such a thrill that there's not much struggle. Moving from the blonde, blue-eyed sixties girl to the deep, burgundy-haired woman sitting in her penthouse listening to poetry—that's just fun.

SS: The episode is set in the mid-sixties, and you get to wear a miniskirt. That's quite a change from the elegant fashions of the fifties.

KM: It's set in 1965. Julie is this wacky, wild, free character. She reminded me a lot of Goldie Hawn in *BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE*. An acting teacher of mine told me that parts are like tarot cards, so when I played Julie, I felt like her energy rubbed off on my life. "Have a good time! Life's short! Just let it go and don't worry about anything!" It was great to step into those shoes for a while. She had Nero and Archie wrapped around her little finger, which was incredible to play, because usually the women are wrapped around their fingers. There are a few smart women in the Rex Stout books, but most of the time I play victims. Julie was a real activator.

SS: And a singer.

KM: I didn't sing, actually. We couldn't figure out how to do it, so I actually did it as a beat poem. I did it that way in the first read-through, and Tim fell off his chair. He said, "That's what it's got to be! That's it!" And I said, "No! Oh, no!" (Laughs) But I think it turned out really well. Definitely my favorite part of the show.

SS: Obviously, you love being an actress, and in one episode last season you even got to play an actress—Rita Sorrell in *EENY, MEENY, MURDER MO*.

KM: I just made her as outrageous and actressy as I could possibly imagine. She was one of those people who constantly do things that serve themselves and their own agenda.

SS: Rita wound up on Wolfe's lap, struggling to get away from him.

KM: Yes! Poor Maury! I don't think he's recovered from that! (Laughs)

FRANKLY SCARLET

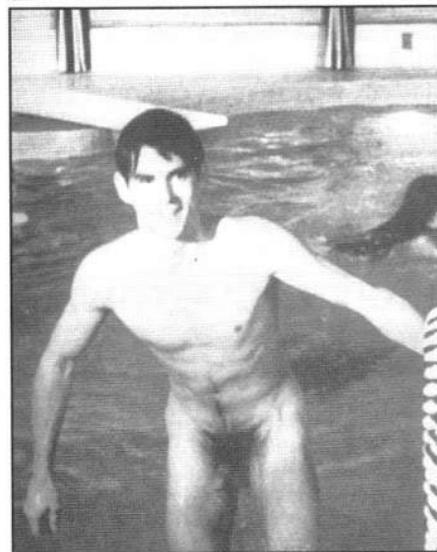
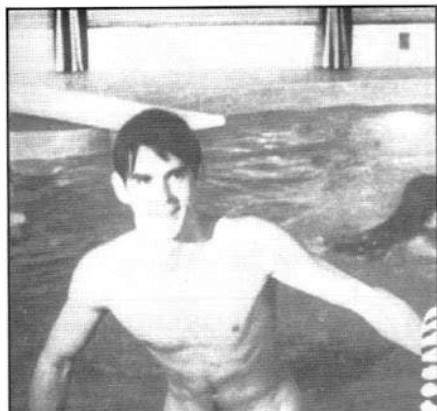
Continued from page 12

Earlier in the spring, NYC's Vortex Theatre Company continued its tradition of gay-themed plays featuring under-dressed actors with Robert Cole's *IN MY DREAMS I SEE DANCING NAKED MEN*, one of the Vortex's better efforts. The Big Apple used to play host to dozens of companies producing gay theater, but the Vortex—housed at the Sanford Meisner Theatre at 164 11th Avenue—stands practically alone these days. Strange, since the costume budgets are usually so low . . .

If naked boys acting isn't your thing, then it won't take much persuading to turn your orbs to the lush photo of luscious Alexxus Young on page 12. Tom and I partied with Alexxus at Frightvision 2002 this past spring and found her to be a true rarity—a Scream Queen with brains. (Why, she has so many brains she doesn't even like being called a Scream Queen!) The 20-year-old stunner can be seen in *ARACHNIA* (as a party girl who's afraid of—what else?—spiders) and read at www.ReallyScary.com, where she has her own weekly cyberspace column.

Can't get enough of RECORD RACK raconteur Ross Care? Then track down the Performing Arts books published by The Library of Congress. The 1998 edition covering motion pictures features Ross' piece "The Great (Almost) American Novel Becomes the Great American Film Score: Johnny Green's Music for *Raintree County*" (the book is big enough to encompass that title) and the 2002 tome on broadcasting has our Music Man lending an ear to "Movies in the Air: Dramatized Shows in Radio's Late Golden Age." Essential reading, Scarlet Streeters!

Give him an Ince and he'll take a mile—Peter Bogdanovich has a critical hit on his hands with *CAT'S MEOW*, the true tale of the murky death of Tinseltown director Thomas H. Ince in 1924. (Did Ince stop a bullet fired by William Randolph Hearst and meant for Charlie Chaplin, or did he die of acute indigestion? How's that for acute mystery?) Concerning *THE LAST PICTURE SHOW*, the flick that made him a force to reckon



Gary Brockette went the Full Monty (bottom picture) in 1971's *THE LAST PICTURE SHOW*, but the DVD Director's Cut is just that—cut.

with in 1971, Bogdanovich may have suffered a murky death of his own—at least in terms of integrity. Ye Red recently caught the film on DVD and was shocked, shocked to discover that editing had been perpetrated on the nude pool party scene. (According to Scarlet Consultant Laser Joe Failla, the cuts were originally made for the Director's Edition of the laserdisc.) Sez Peter the Great on the audio commentary: "Now here's the infamous swimming pool scene, which we've cut slightly. Very slightly." What Petey doesn't say is that the cut is a full-frontal shot of actor Gary Brockette climbing out of the drink to greet Randy Quaid and Cybil Shepherd. Fair enough, if the director decided the film no longer needed the added boost of heads-on nudity, but that doesn't seem to have been the case. Following a reaction shot of Quaid and Shepherd, we cut to actress Helena Huemann leaving the pool—in complete, full-frontal exposure. So what's the story on the purloined peter, Peter? Why the double standard?

That's all, Scarlet Streeters! I'll conclude by thanking all of you who helped make our previous issue one of our all-time best sellers! Keep up the good work . . .

Richard Valley

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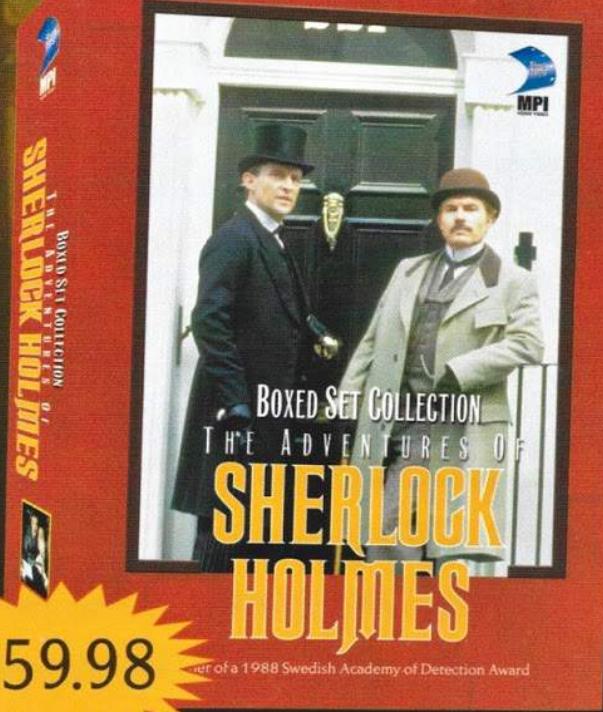
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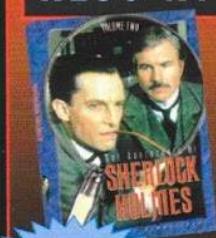


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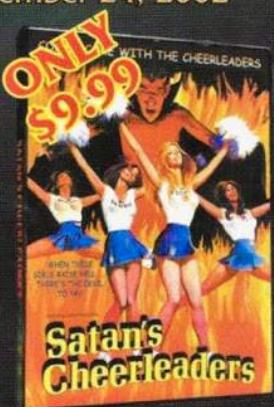
HORRORS OF THE BLACK MUSEUM

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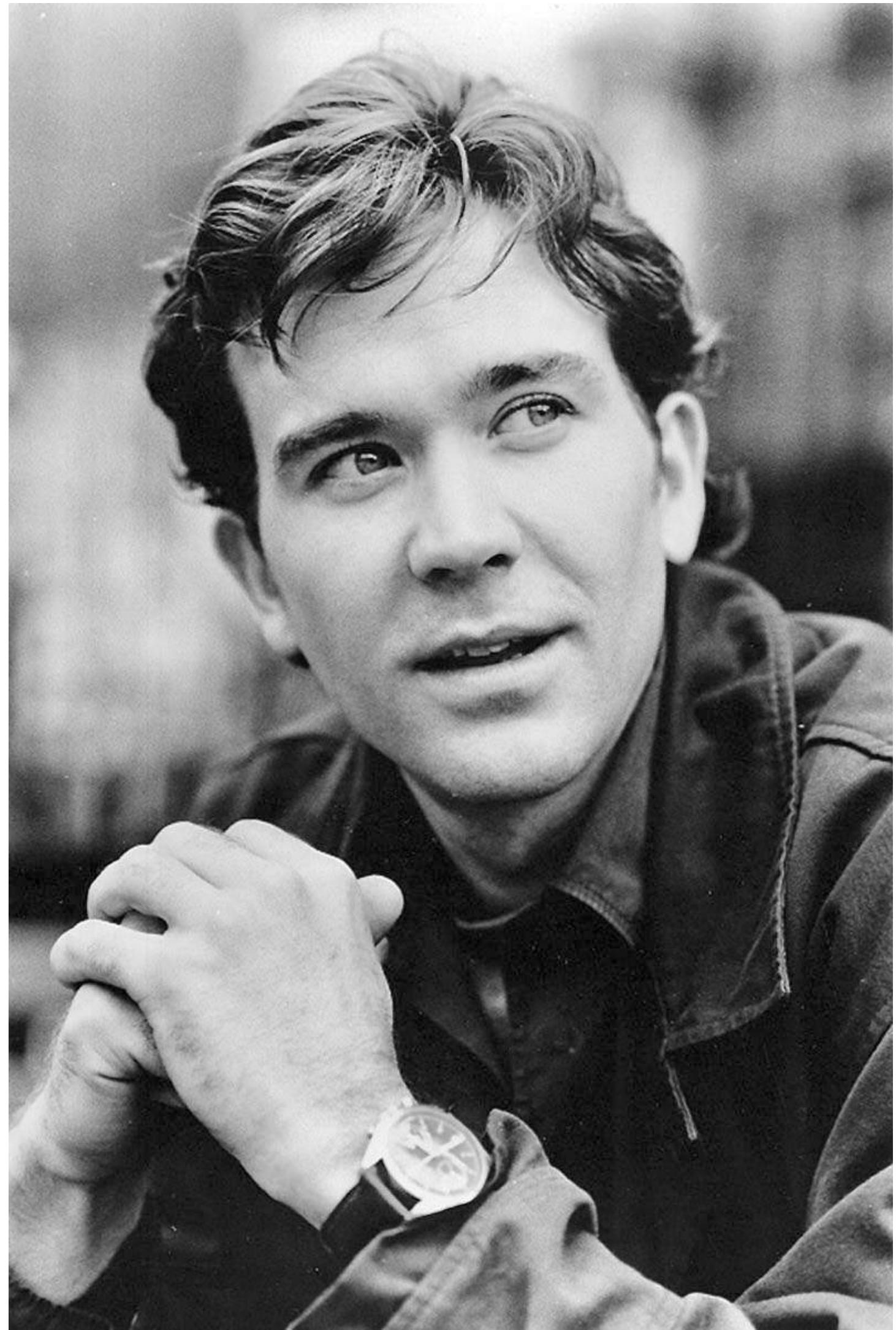
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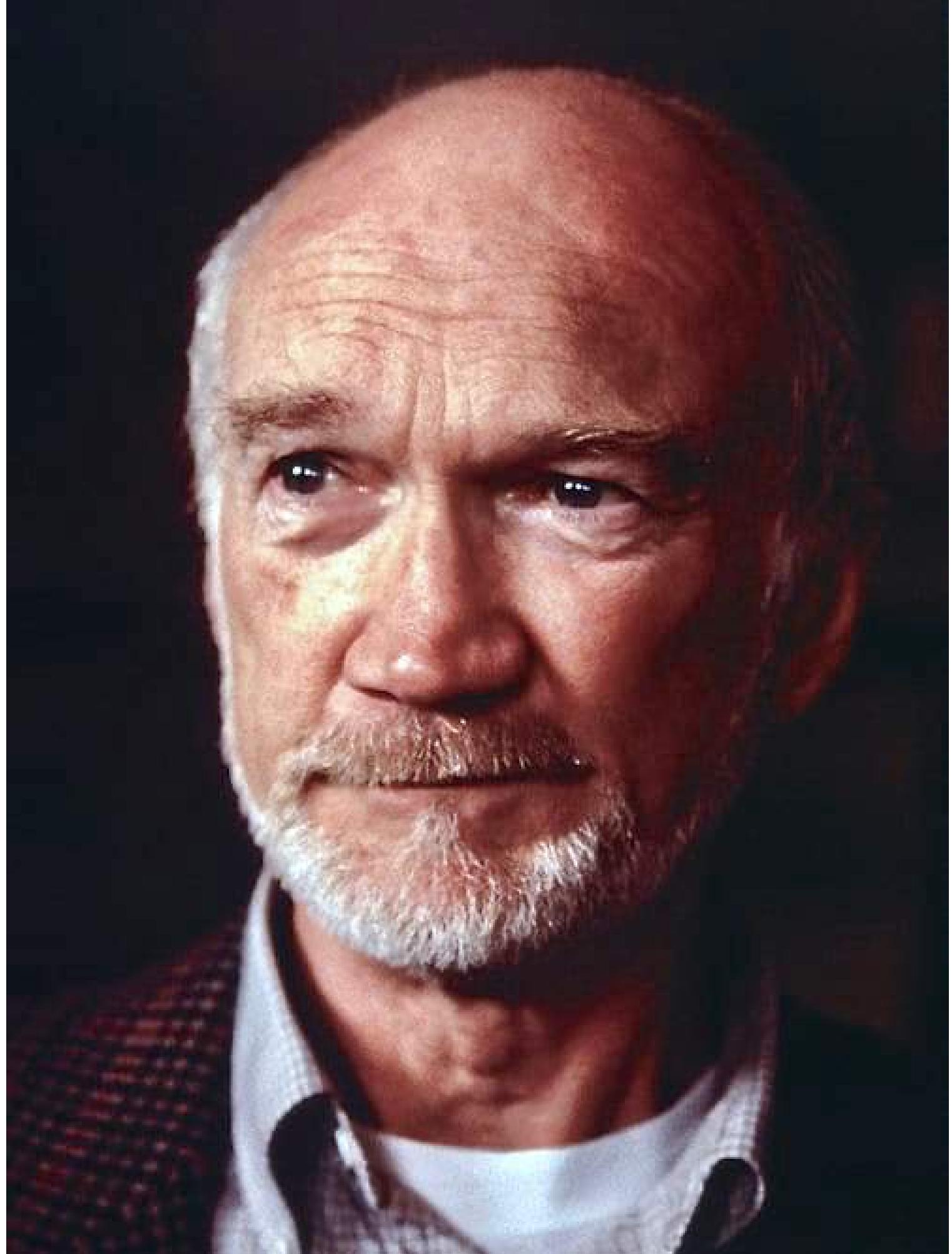
FER-DE-LANCE
A NERO WOLFE MYSTERY

By
**REX
STOUT**

FER-DE-LANCE

REX STOUT

E. P. DUTTON & SONS
NEW YORK





SUMURU
die Tochter
des Satans









**One soul
hungered
to
touch
another!**

WHISPER TO
YOUR FRIENDS
YOU SAW IT!

From the
exciting
story by
Peter
Welbeck

99 WOMEN

...behind bars - without men!

A Commonwealth United Corporation Presentation
STARRING

STARRING

Maria

HIGH
80

**Maria Mercedes
SCHELL · McCAM**

...behind bars - without men!

Luciana

Herbert

LOM
as the Governor

COLOR

Suggested For Mature Audiences

Screenplay by PETER WELBECK · Directed by JESS FRANCO · Produced by HARRY ALAN TOWERS · A Commonwealth United Entertainment, Inc. and Towers of London (Films) Limited Production
Released by Commonwealth United Entertainment, Inc.

THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL X

The music
goes
*bum-titty bum-titty
bum!*

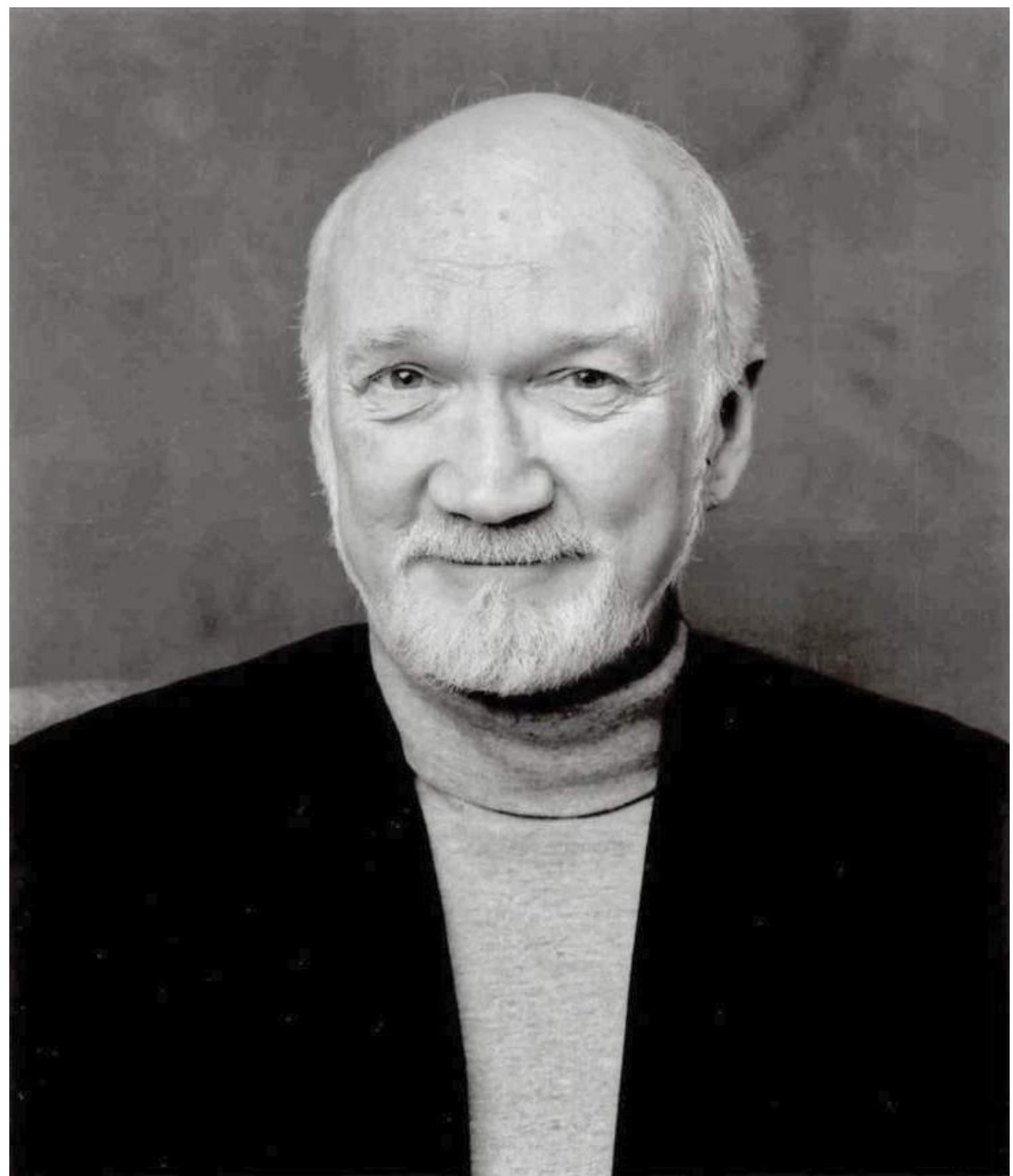
STEPHEN NATHAN ... CINDY WILLIAMS
BRUCE KIMMEL



PLUS

SEX SLAVES X











THE NERO WOLFE CAN GET AWAY WITH MURDER—
AND MAKE YOU LIKE IT!

LEAGUE OF FRIGHTENED MEN



THE NEW
NERO WOLFE
MYSTERY THRILLER!

COLUMBIA
PICTURES

WALTER CONNOLLY
AS THE FAMOUS DETECTIVE, NERO WOLFE

LIONEL STANDER EDUARDO CIANNELLI IRENE HERVEY
Directed by ALFRED E. GREEN
A COLUMBIA PICTURE

Edward ARNOLD



MADE IN U.S.A.
MEET NERO WOLFE



with
LIONEL STANDER
Directed by
Herbert Biberman
a B. P. SCHULBERG
Production
A COLUMBIA PICTURE



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Nero Wolfe

STEPS OUT-INTO THREE MURDER MYSTERIES!

**THE
LEAGUE
OF
FRIGHTENED MEN**

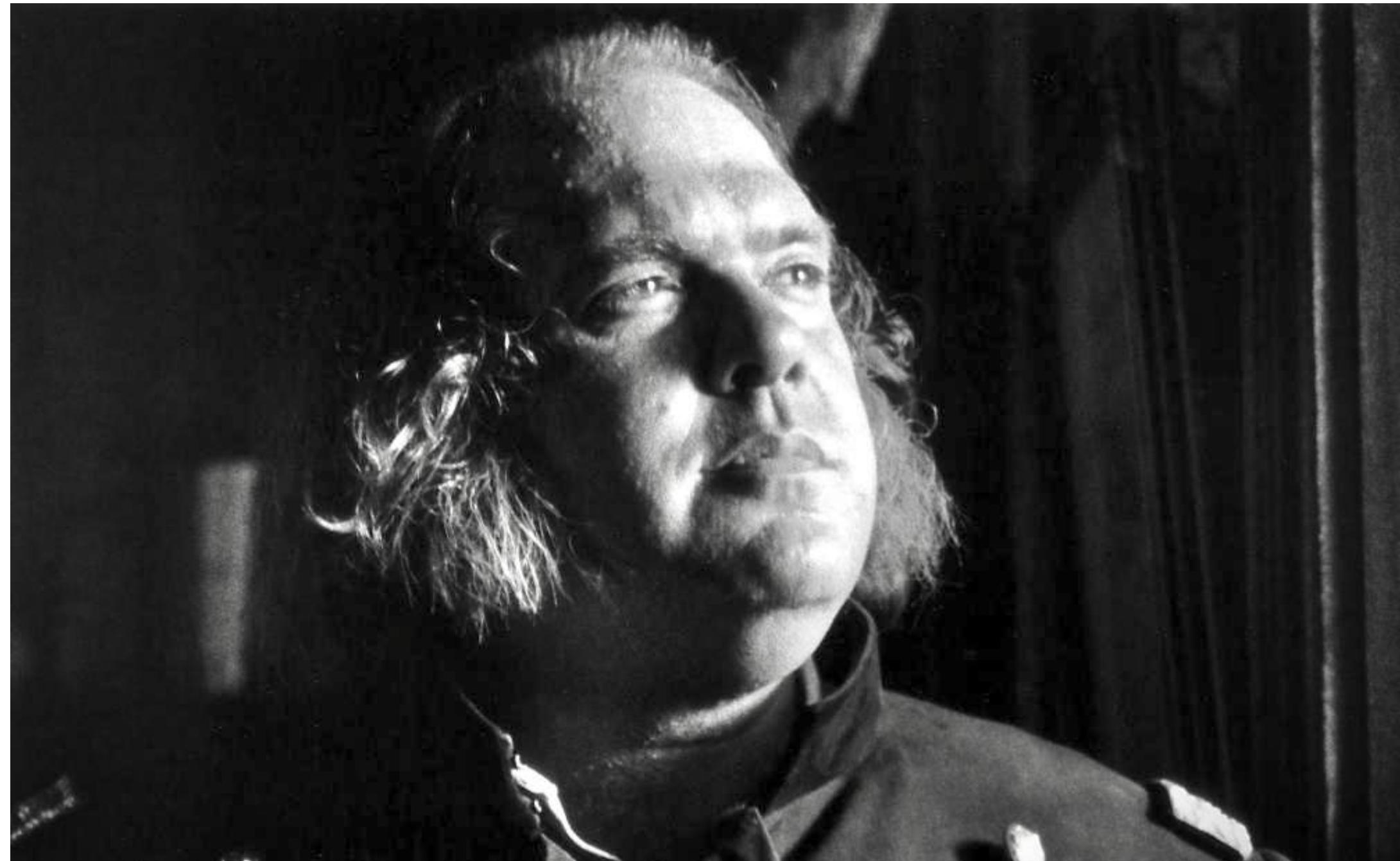


WALTER CONNOLLY
AS THE FAMOUS DETECTIVE NERO WOLFE

LIONEL STANDER EDUARDO CIANNELLI IRENE HERVEY

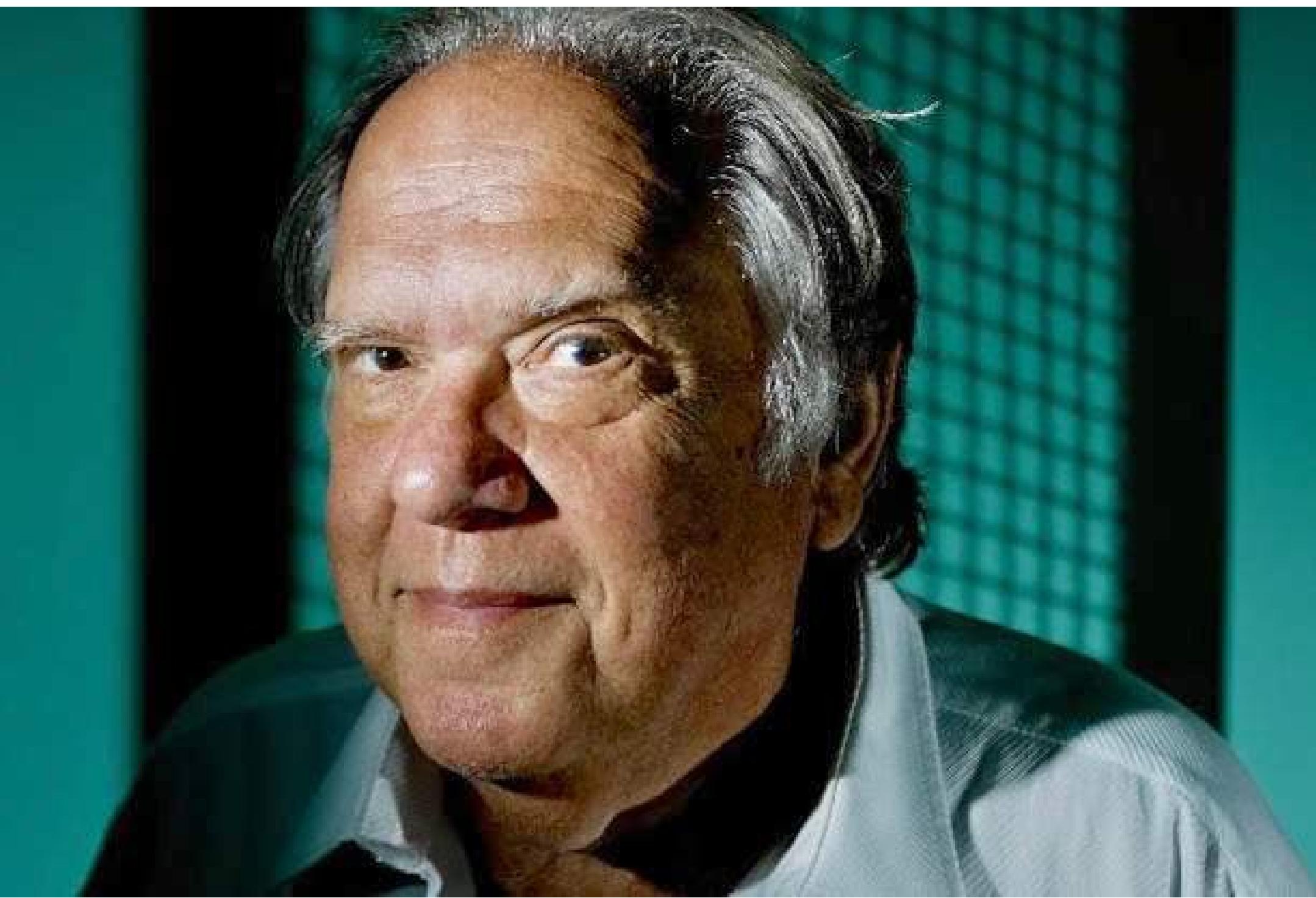
DIRECTED BY ALFRED E. GREEN

A COLUMBIA PICTURE



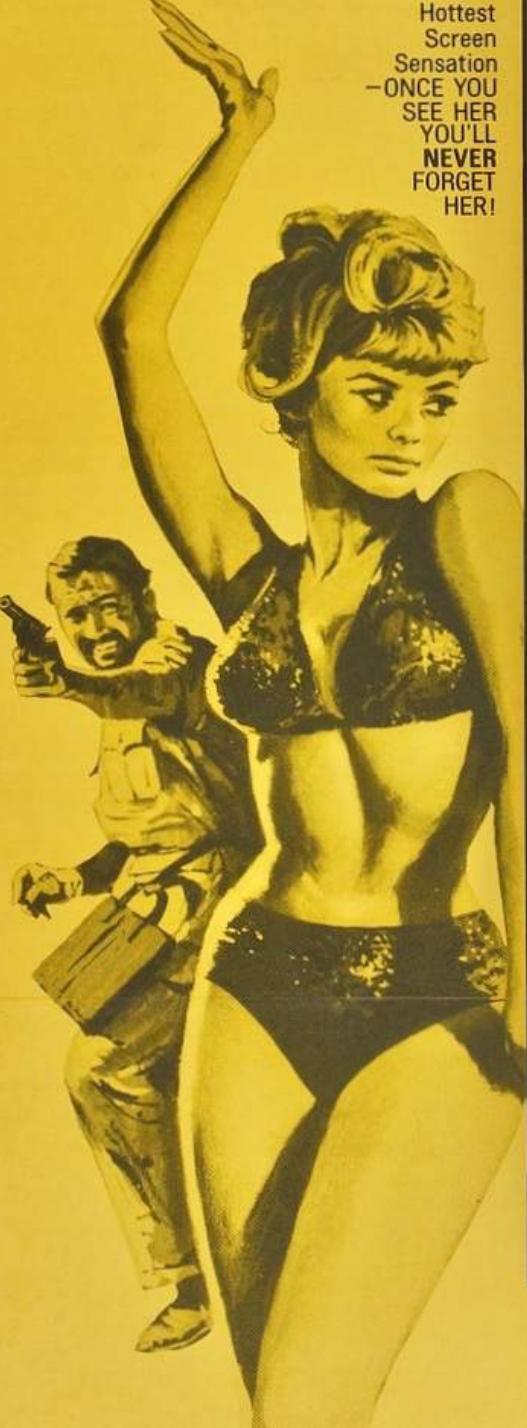








MEET VIVI BACH!
 She's Europe's
 Hottest
 Screen
 Sensation
 -ONCE YOU
 SEE HER
 YOU'LL
 NEVER
 FORGET
 HER!



Capital of Hell...

moZAMBIQUE



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moZAMBIQUE



Where love and murder meet by night...and explode by day!



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(Actually filmed in the teeming murder-alleys of exotic Mozambique!)
 and Introducing
VIVI BACH · MARTIN BENSON · DIETMAR SCHOENHERR · GERT VAN DEN BERGH
 VIC PERRY · Screenplay by PETER YELDHAM · Produced by OLIVER A. UNGER
 Directed by ROBERT LYNN · A SEVEN ARTS PICTURES RELEASE

TECHNICOLOR®

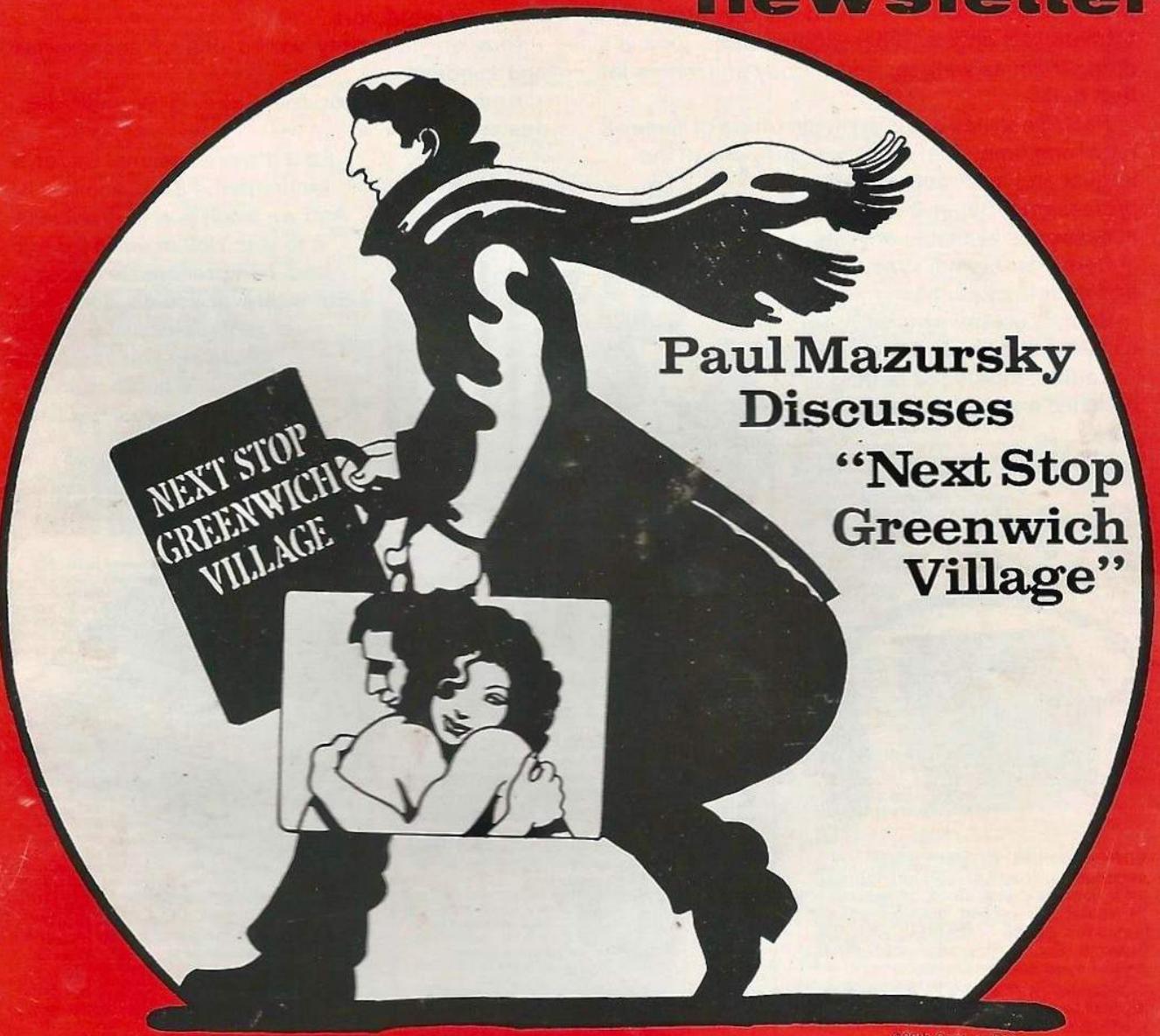


102

Vol. 9, No. 6 \$1.00

Filmmakers

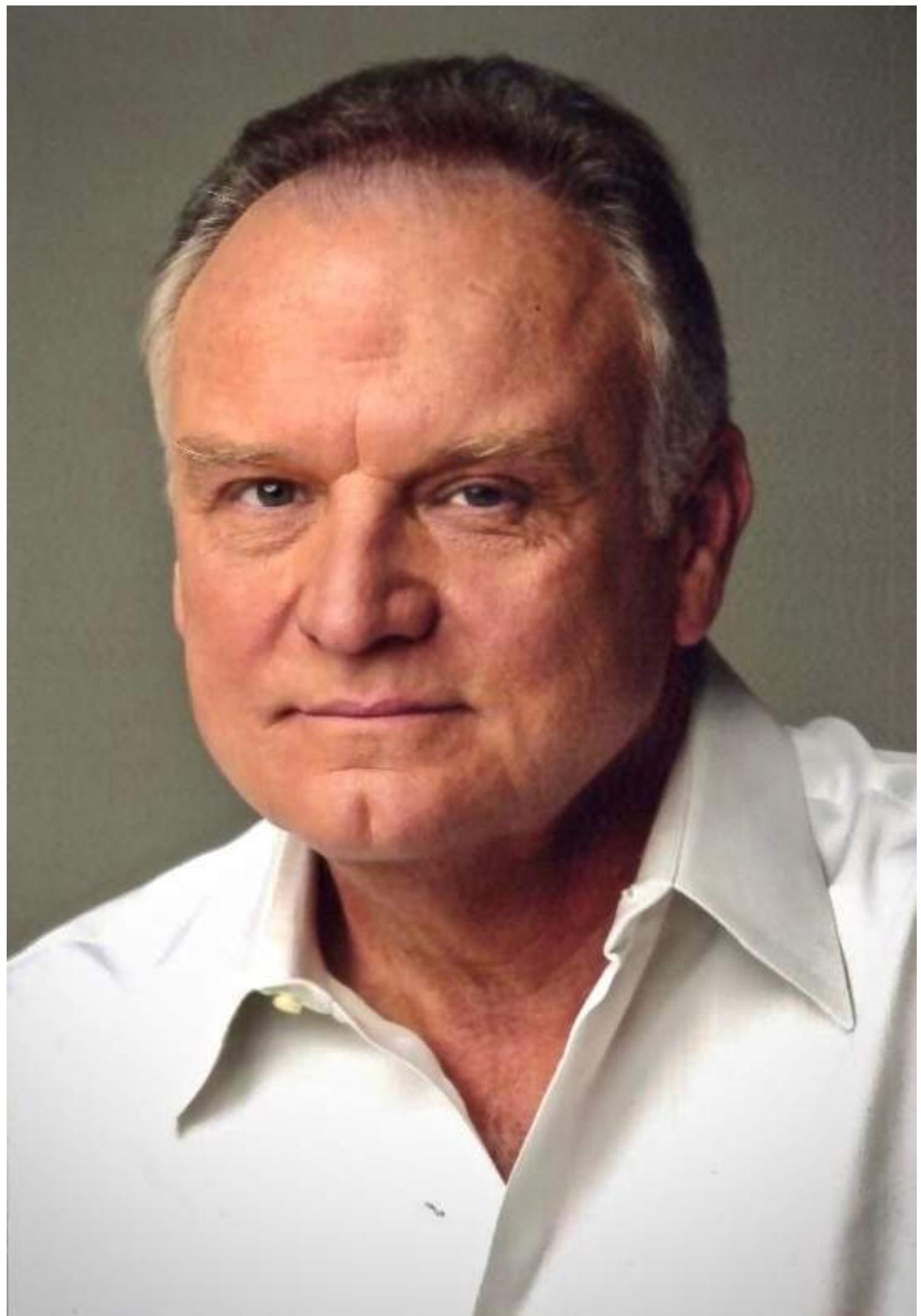
newsletter



Paul Mazursky
Discusses
“Next Stop
Greenwich
Village”

©2018 Century-Fox

An Interview With Robert Wise
Film and Tape: Mixing Oil and Water
How We Made “The First Nudie Musical”
Eyewitness Video: What Is The Impact?
Breaking Into The Educational Market
Using Food In Film Spectra Tricolor Meter



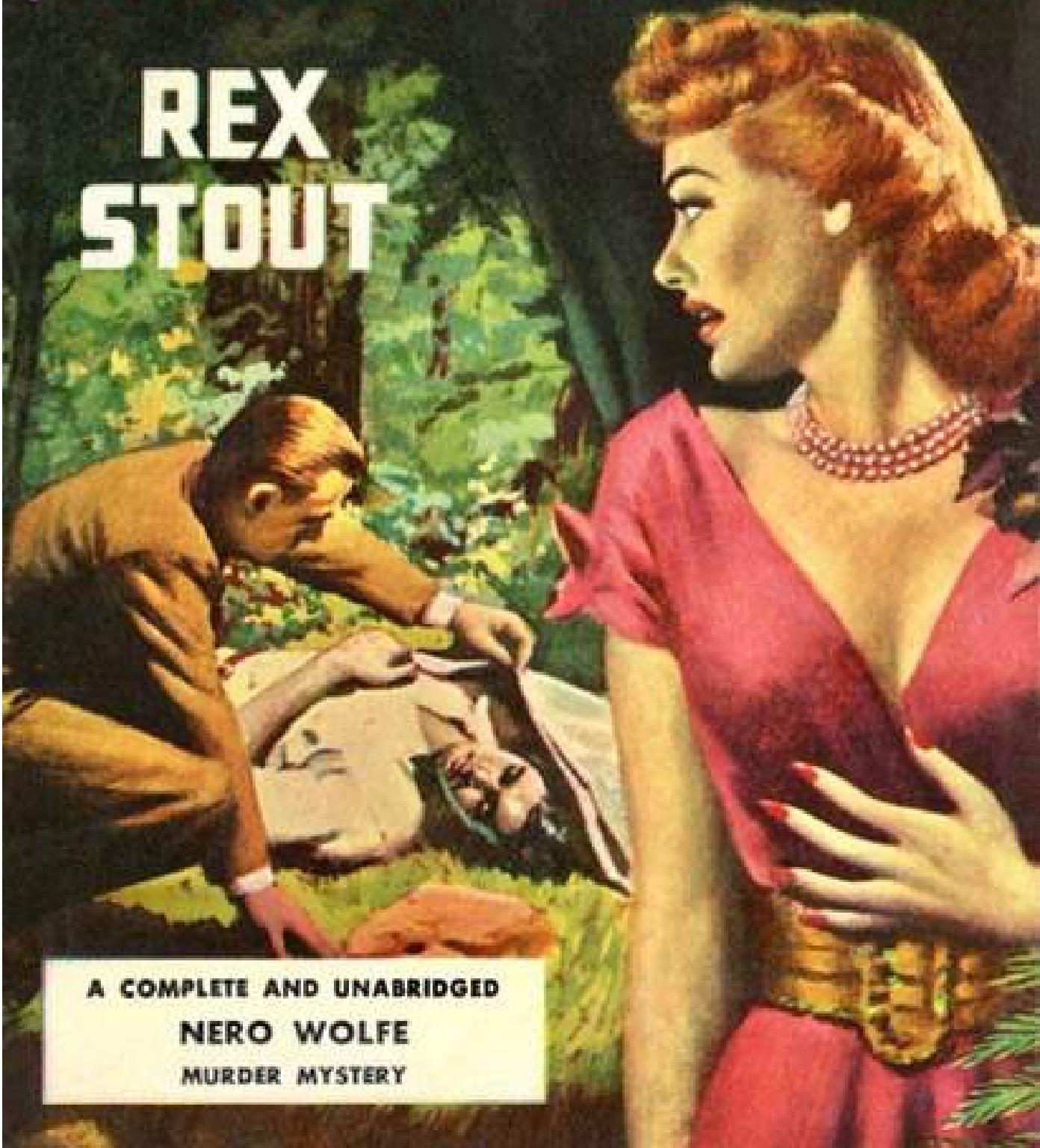


NERO WOLFE PLAYS WITH DEATH IN A HOUSE
OF FATAL FLOWERS AND STARK TERROR

ANC

THE CASE OF THE BLACK ORCHIDS

REX STOUT



A COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED
NERO WOLFE
MURDER MYSTERY

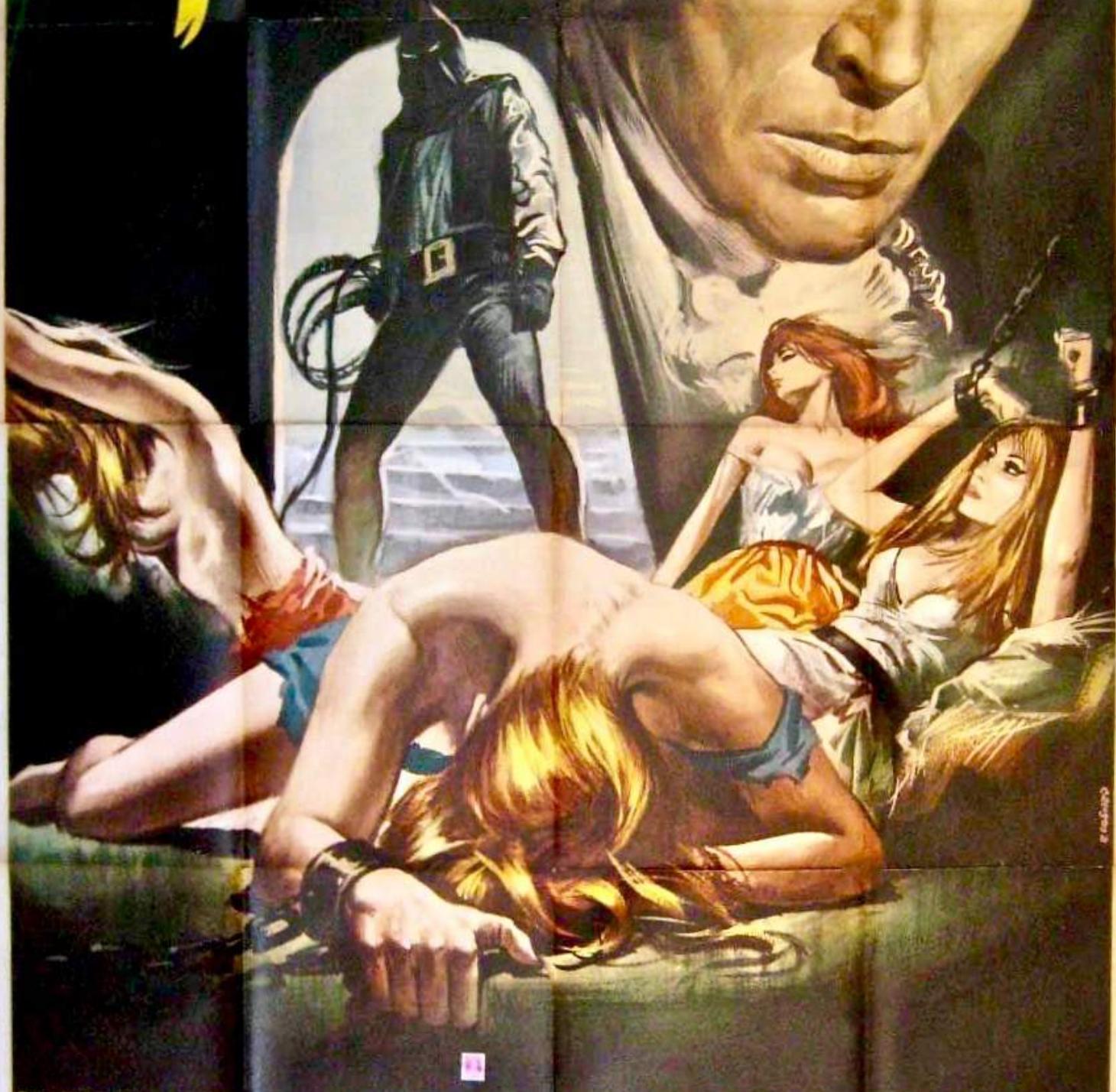


BFin-4



LA GARIGLIANO FILM PRESENTA

IL TRONO DI FUOCO



CHRISTOPHER LEE - DENNIS PRICE - MARIA SCHELL - MARGARETH LEE - MARIA ROHN - PETER MARTELL

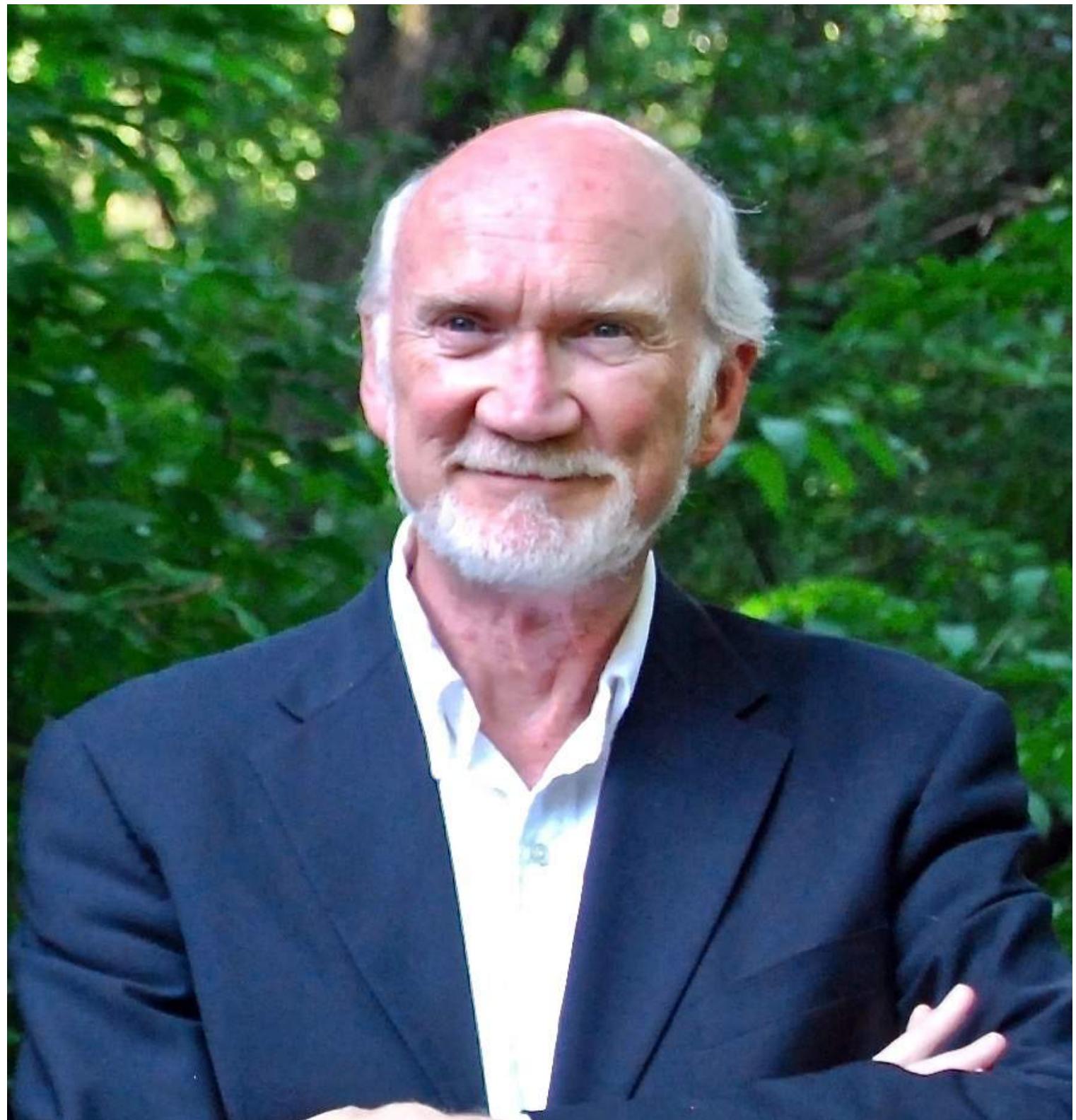
PRODIMEX FILM
FENIX FILM
TERRA FILM

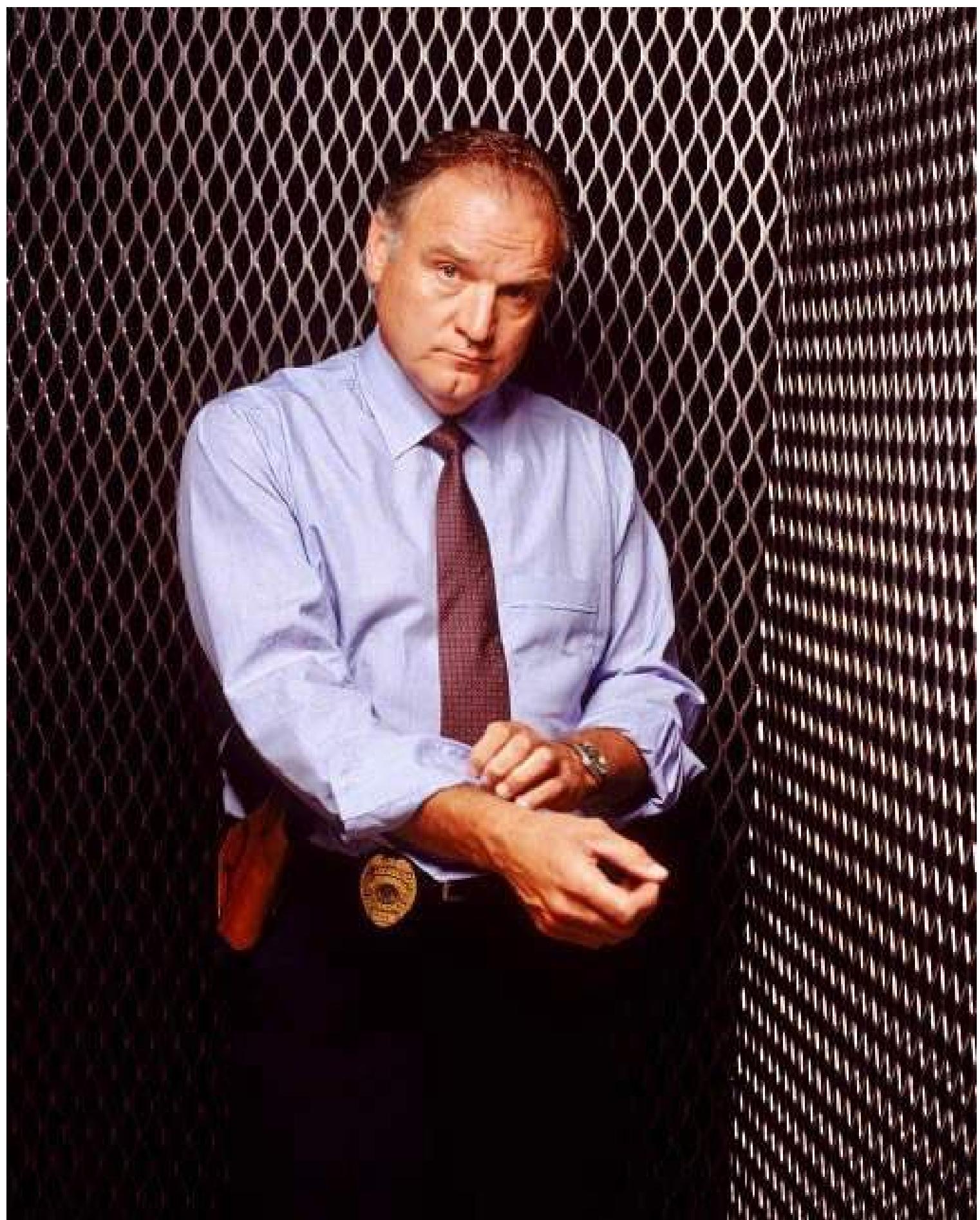
REGIA JESS FRANCO

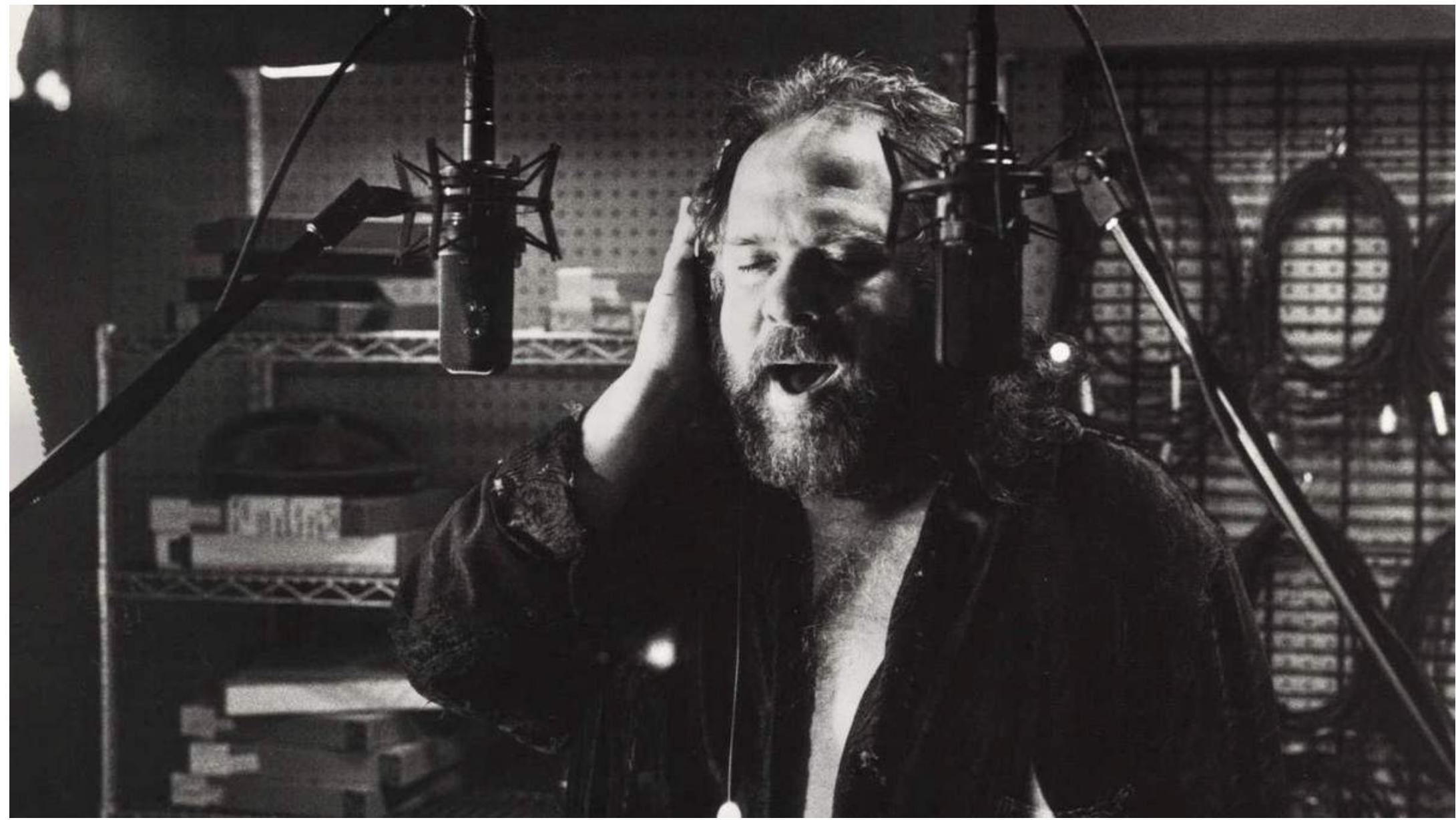
CINESCOPE - COLORE DELLA TELECOLOR

MUSICA DEL N. BRUNO NICOLAI

AVVISO VISTO N. N. 2011 del 10/10/69











444-Pub-2







films and filming

july 1976

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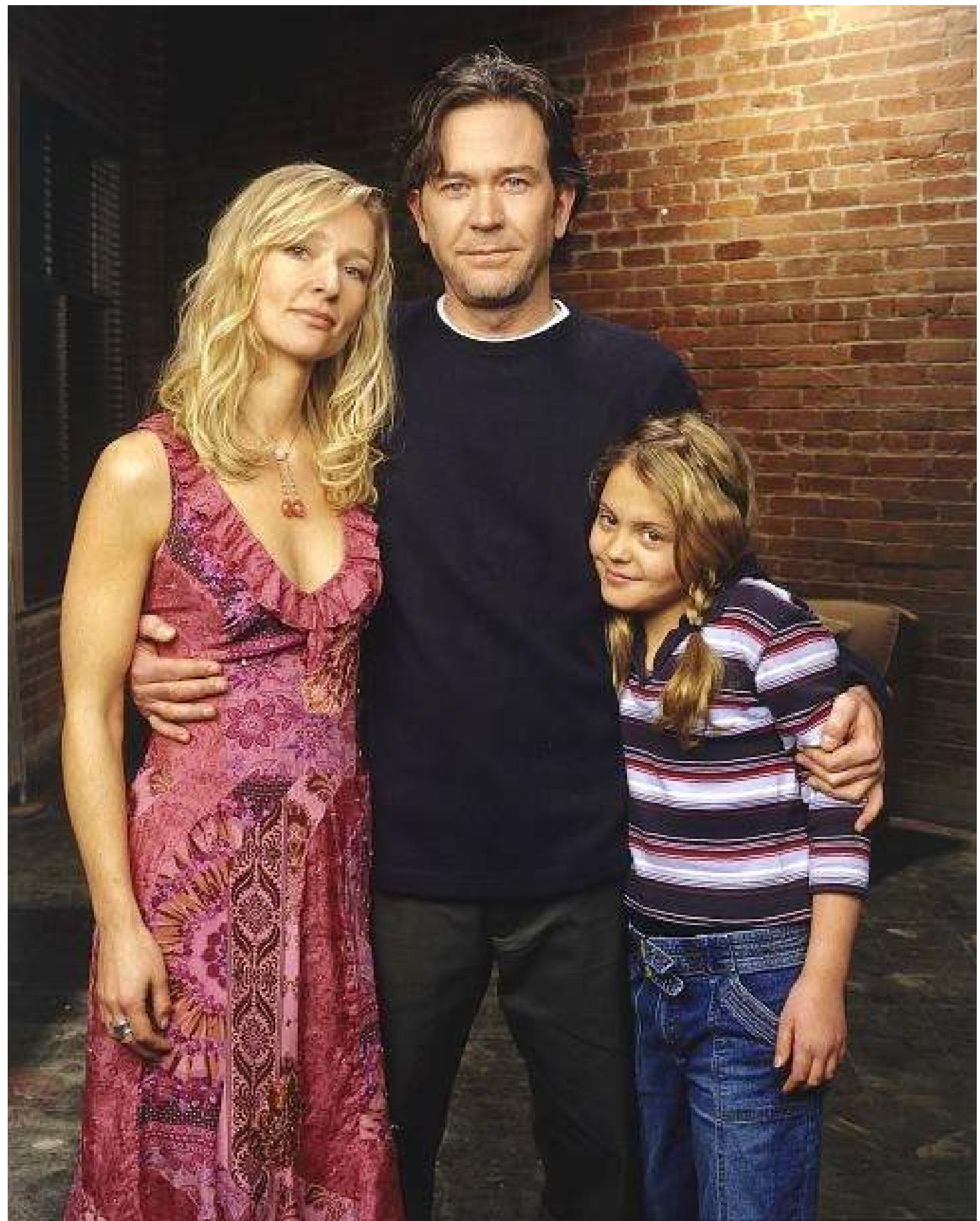


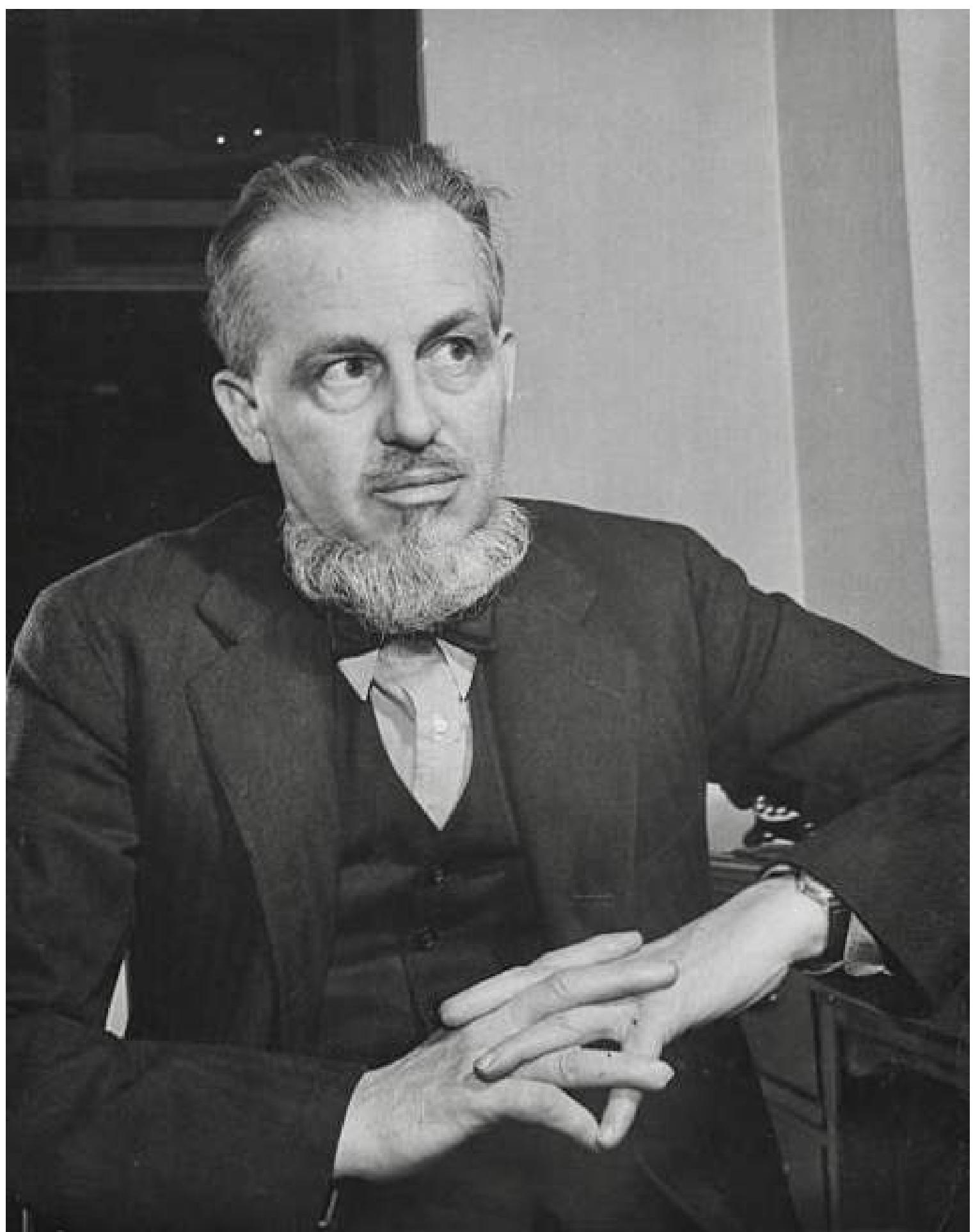
The First
Nudie
Musical











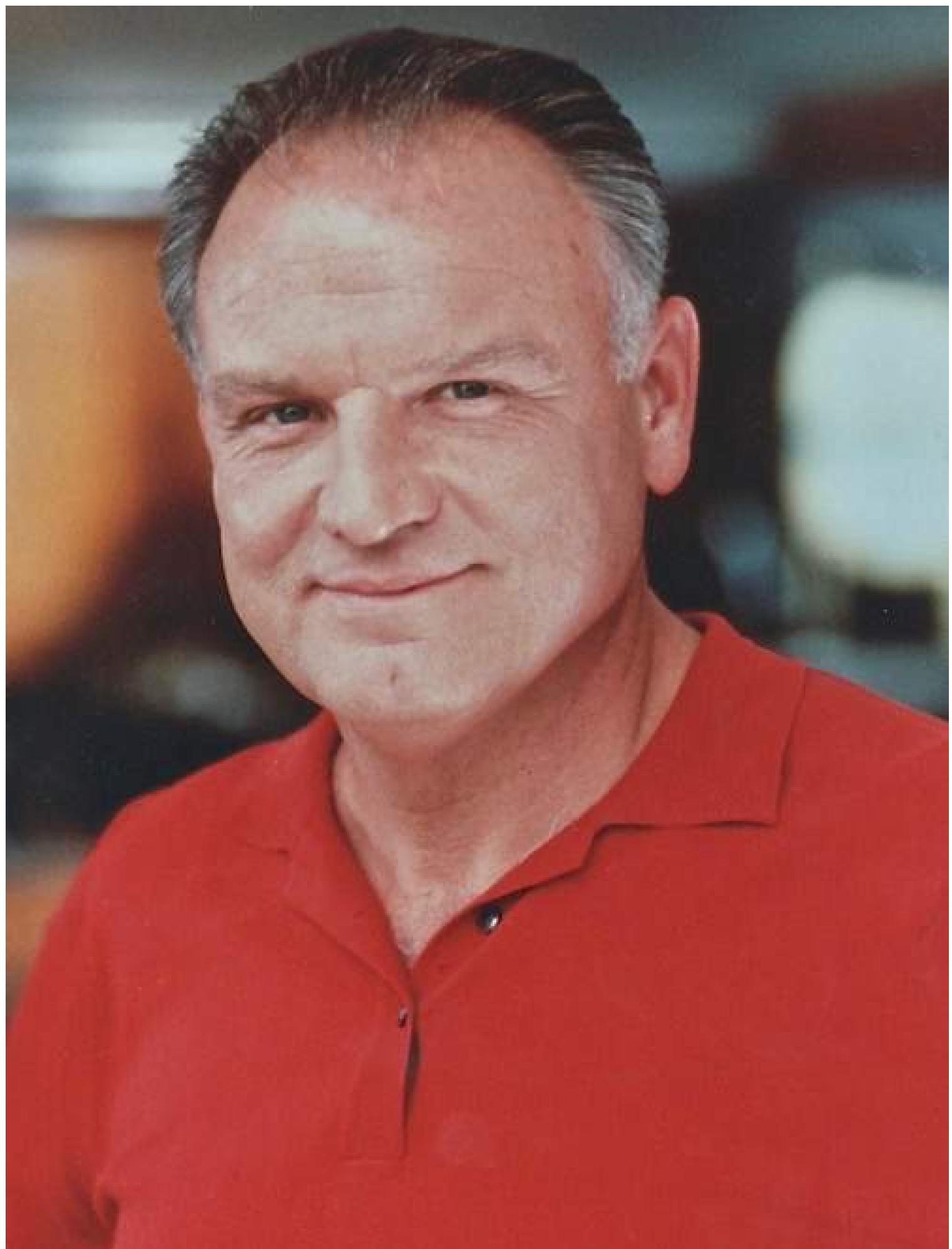




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Get the
best work
with my best work
Howard I. Smith



STEREO
1001

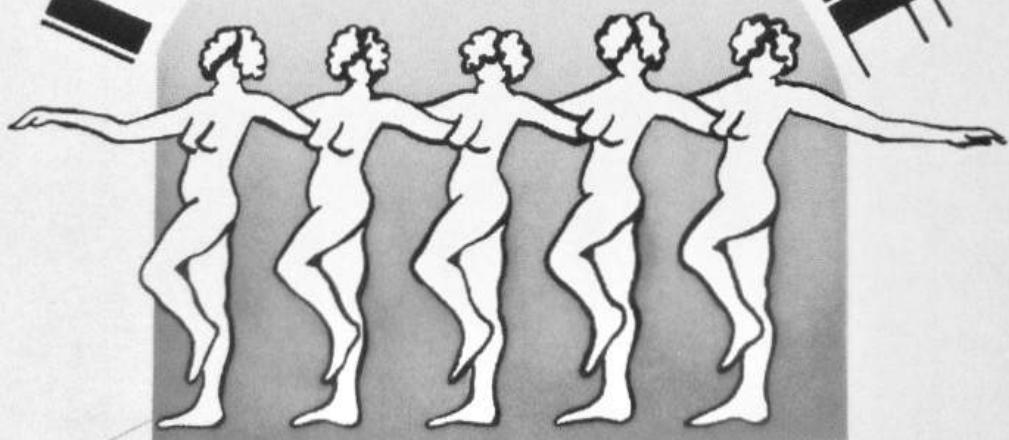
1ST MUSICAL
RECORDS

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK RECORDING

With love
Dorothy
Grainger

To Harvey -
much love -
Bruce

THE FIRST NUDE



Robert Monroe

MUSICAL

A PARAMOUNT RELEASE

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
BRUCE KIMMEL



Original Soundtrack Recording:
"THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL"

starring

STEPHEN NATHAN
as
Harry

CINDY WILLIAMS
as
Rosie

BRUCE KIMMEL
as
John

also starring

Leslie Ackerman
as
Suzie

Alan Abelew
as
George

Diana Canova
as
Juanita

Alexandra Morgan
as
Miss Mary LaRue

Executive Producers Stuart W. Phelps & Peter S. Brown

Screenplay, Music & Lyrics by Bruce Kimmel

Produced by Jack Reeves

Directed by Mark Haggard & Bruce Kimmel

A Paramount Release

in Color

Rated R: Restricted

Music Arranged and Conducted by

RENE HALL

Engineered by

BUDDY BRUNDO

THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK ALBUM

produced by
Murray Cohen

designed by
Nancy Lee

Supervised by
Steve Harris

Musical Selections

Side One:

Main Title Rene Hall conducting 'The First Nudie Musical' Orchestra.
The First Nudie Musical Harry and Backers
The Lights And The Smiles Susia
Orgasm Mr. 'Tux'
Lesbian, Butch, Dyke Butch Girl
Dancing Dildos Mary LaRue and her Dildos

Side Two:

Perversion Juanita and Perverts
Where Is A Man? Eunice
Honey, What Ya Doin' Tonight? Whores
Let 'Em Eat Cake Harry, Rosie and Chorus
I Don't Have To Hide Anymore (End Title)

The Lights And The Smiles
sung by
Annette O'Toole

Where Is A Man?
sung by
Valerie Gillett

Lesbian, Butch, Dyke
sung by
Debbie Shapiro

I Don't Have To Hide Anymore
sung by
Bruce Kimmel

All selections published by Famous Music Corporation
ASCAP
© 1976, 1978

WARNING:

This record is intended for promotional purposes only
Commercial distribution of this album is strictly
forbidden.



Critical Raves from the First Preview Screenings of
"The First Nudie Musical ..."

"Bright, bawdy musical...an R rated parody that
brings welcome comic relief..."

— Bruce Williamson, Playboy

"...Even better than *Murine* for these tired old eyes
is to walk into a where-did-THIS-come-from? picture
like "The First Nudie Musical" and leave it laughing.
Laughing HARD.

...it is full of so many eager and energetic and fresh
new faces that its satiric subject and all those naked
bodies running around seem somehow as innocent as a
Disney movie.

...Some of the porno musical's "Production
numbers" are very funny; one of them, involving
dancing vibrators, is going to go right alongside
"Springtime for Hitler" from "The Producers."

— Jeff Miller, The Houston Chronicle

"As for general humor, coherence, and consistency,
have to rank it up there with "Young Frankenstein."
That would be above "Blazing Saddles" and "The
Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother."

— Ted Maher, The Portland Oregonian

"...one of the comic surprises of the season... The
auditions are a string of the funniest, most outrageous,
hysterical comic moments of the screen year. The
production numbers have the zing of lunacy that
smacks of Chico, Harpo, and Groucho... Irreverent,
bawdy, and a 1970's low society sleazy satirical answer
to Cole and Noel and the gang."

— Don Safran, Dallas Times Herald

1ST MUSICAL RECORDS
1001 Stereo



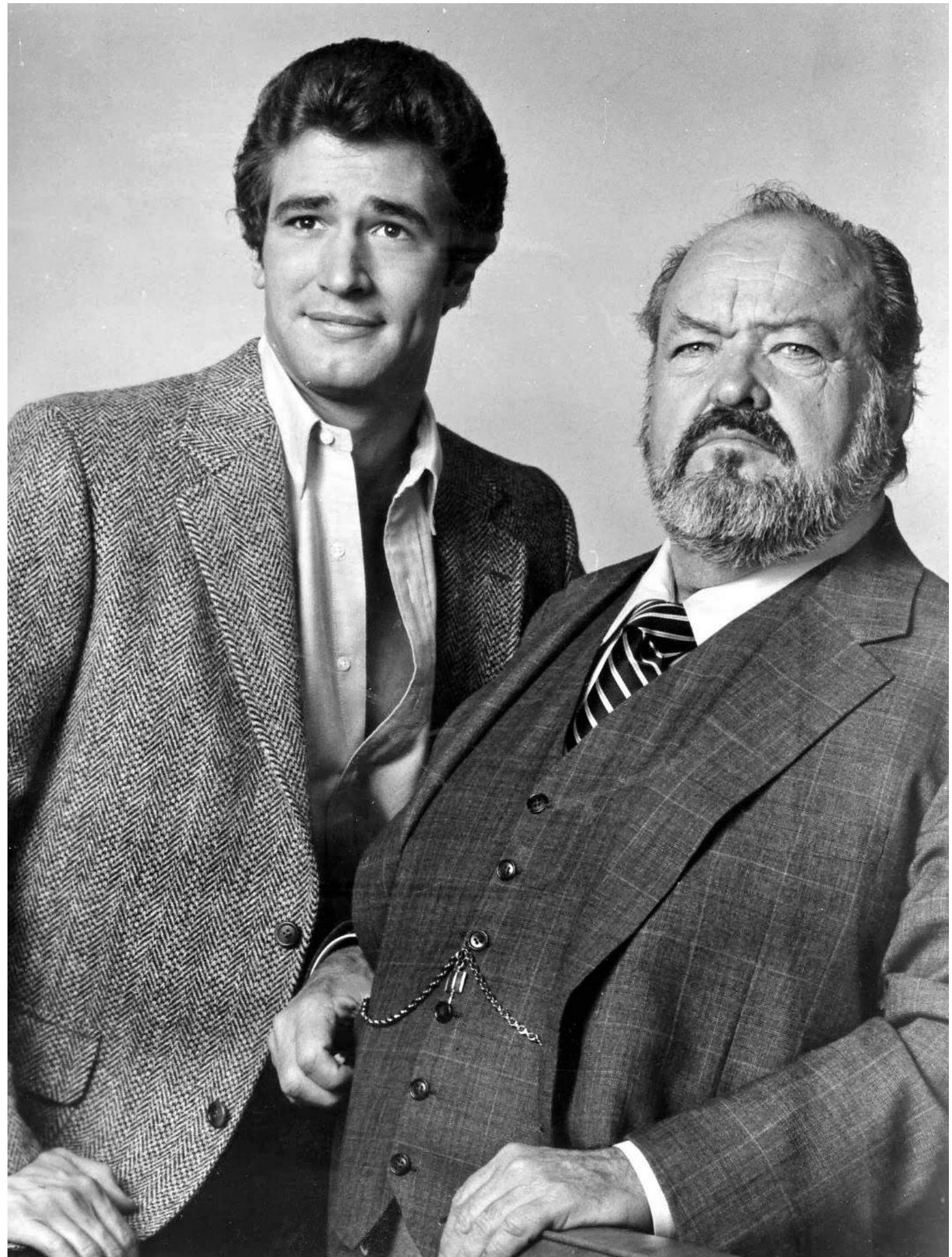










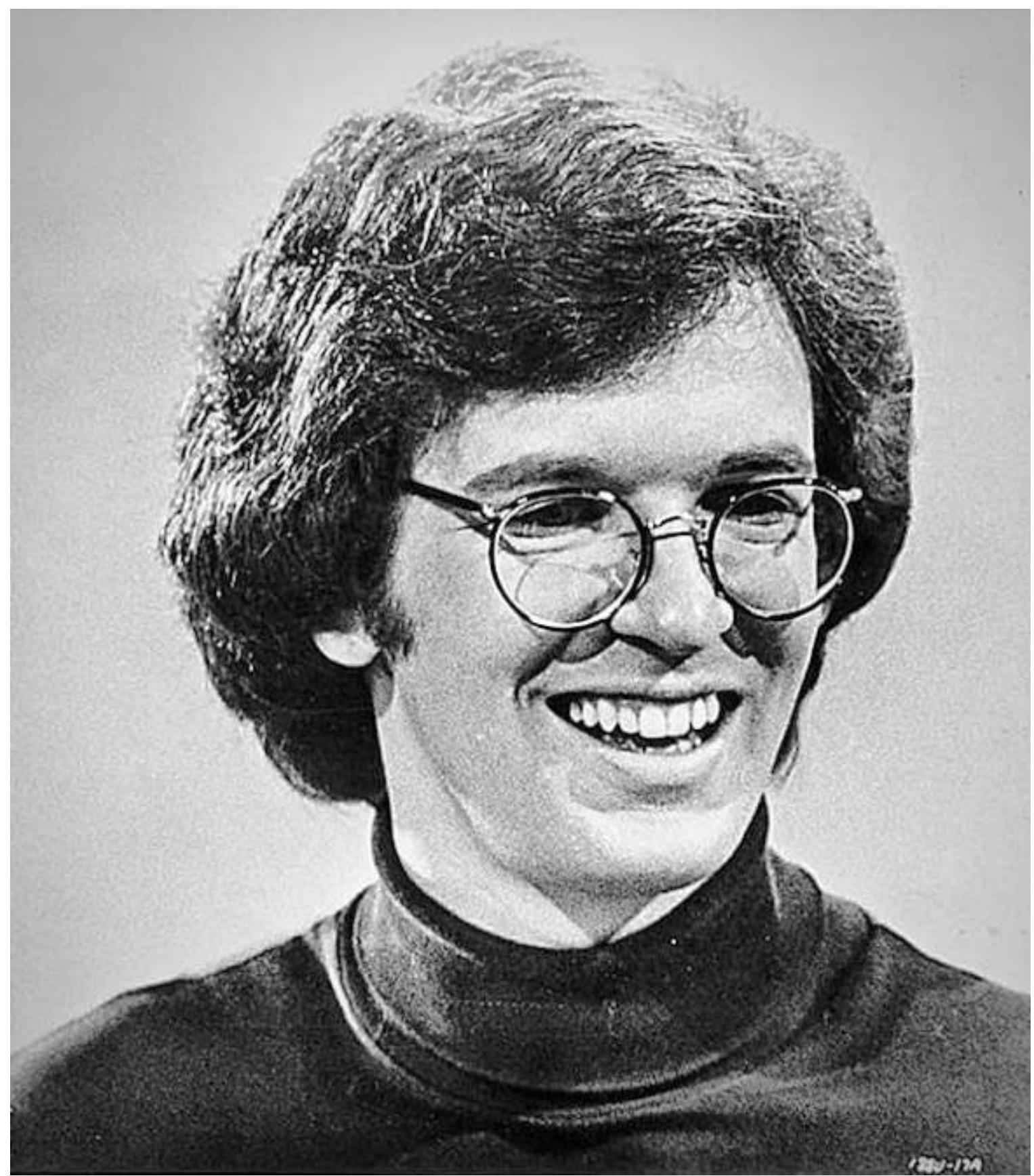












130-124





WILHELM



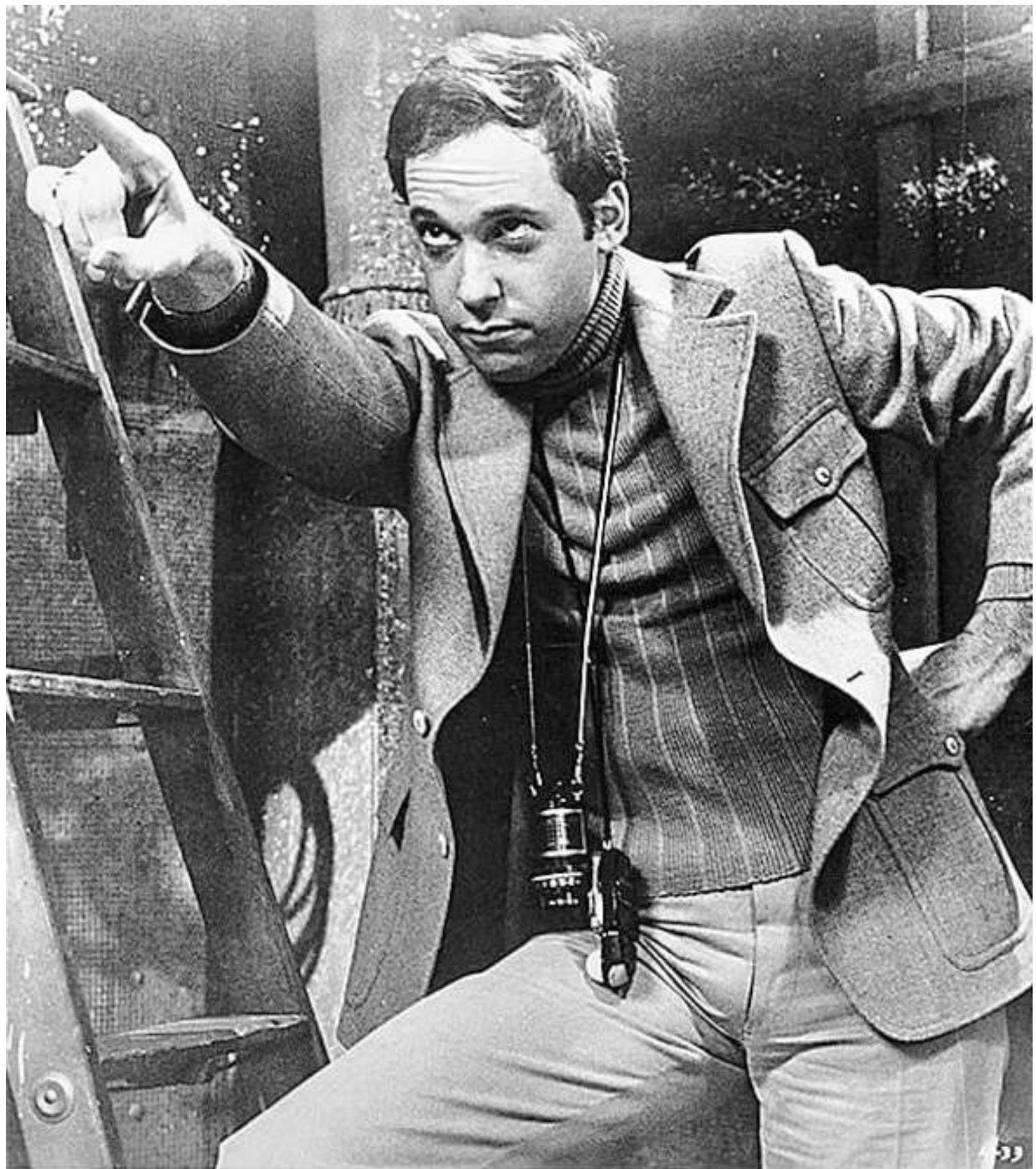


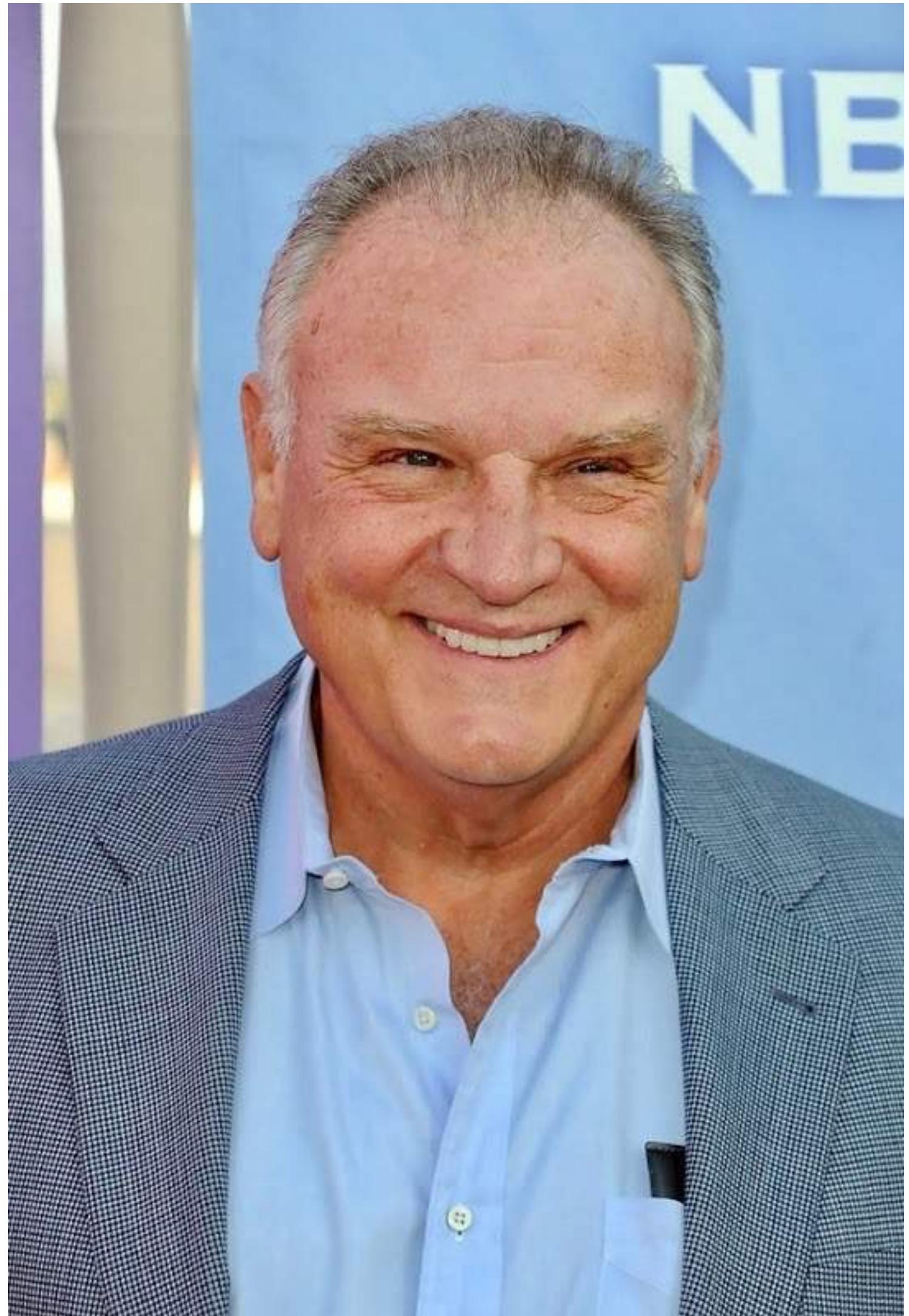
REGD-10



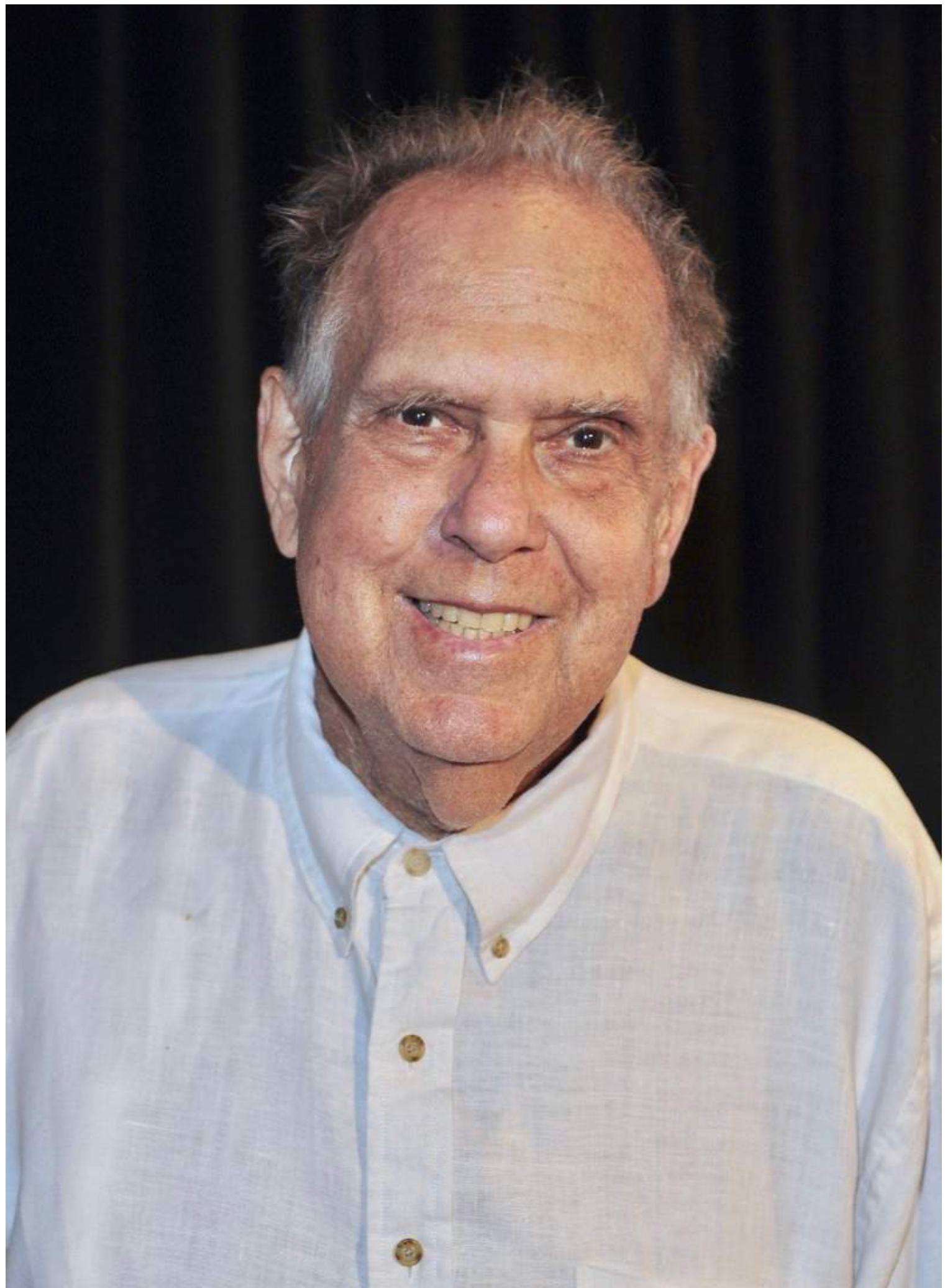


186-3













Die
Folterkammer
des **DR. FU**
MAN CHU

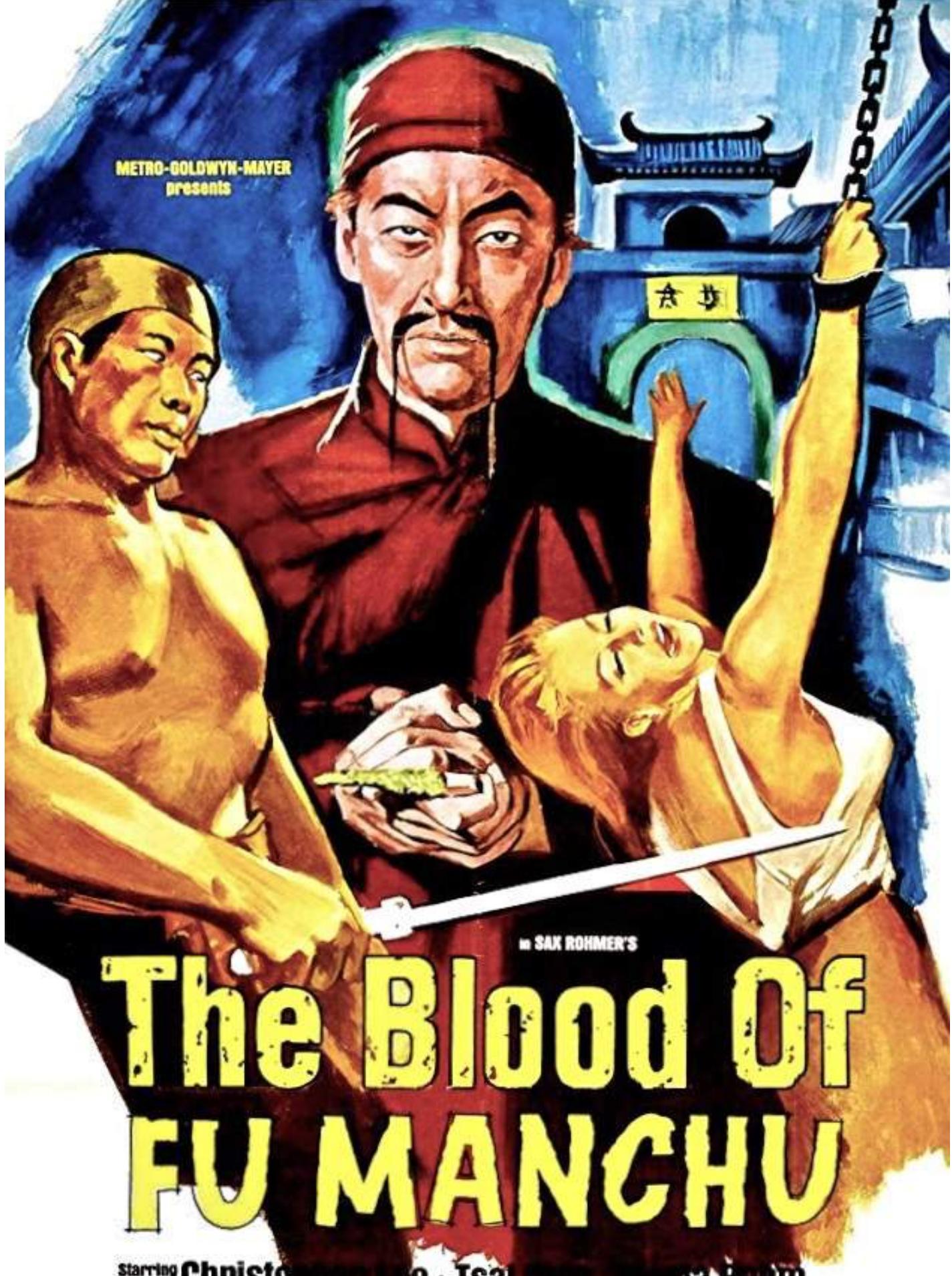
FSK
12





BFM-9

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER
presents



in SAX ROHMER'S

The Blood Of FU MANCHU

Starring Christopher Lee · Tsai Chin · Shirley Eaton

Guest Stars: Richard Green · Shirley Eaton

(as Moyland Smith)

Screenplay by Peter Wellbeck Produced by Harry Alan Towers Directed by Jean Franco

Filmed in **EASTMANCOLOR**







CHRISTOPHER LEE
DOUGLAS WILMER HEINZ DRACHE
MARIE VERSINI

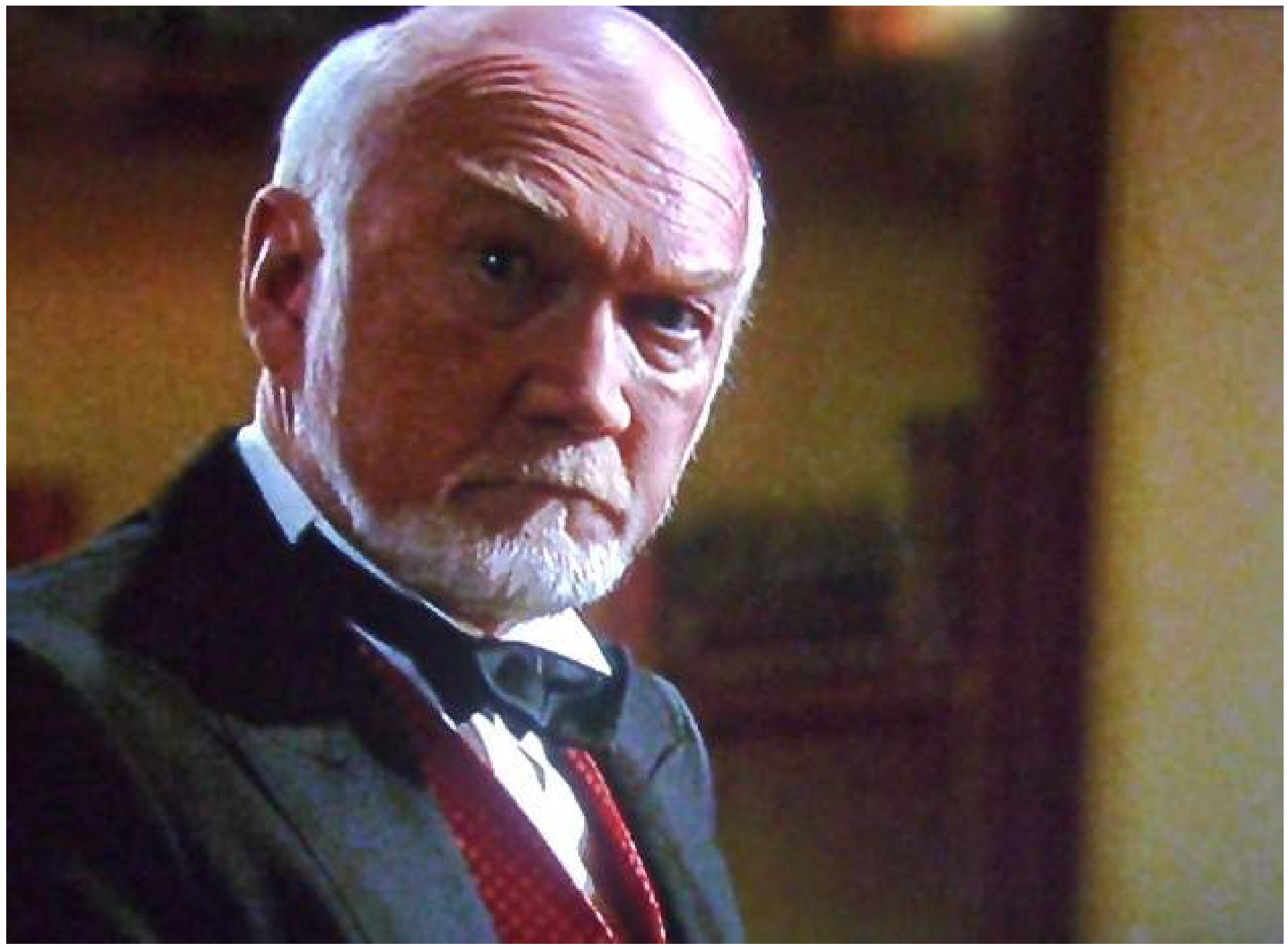
In Sax Rohmer's
"THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU" (U)

with
HOWARD MARION CRAWFORD TSAI CHIN

Guest stars RUPERT DAVIES ROGER HANIN

IN EASTMAN COLOUR

FROM ANGLO AMALGAMATED FOR WARNER-PATHE RELEASE



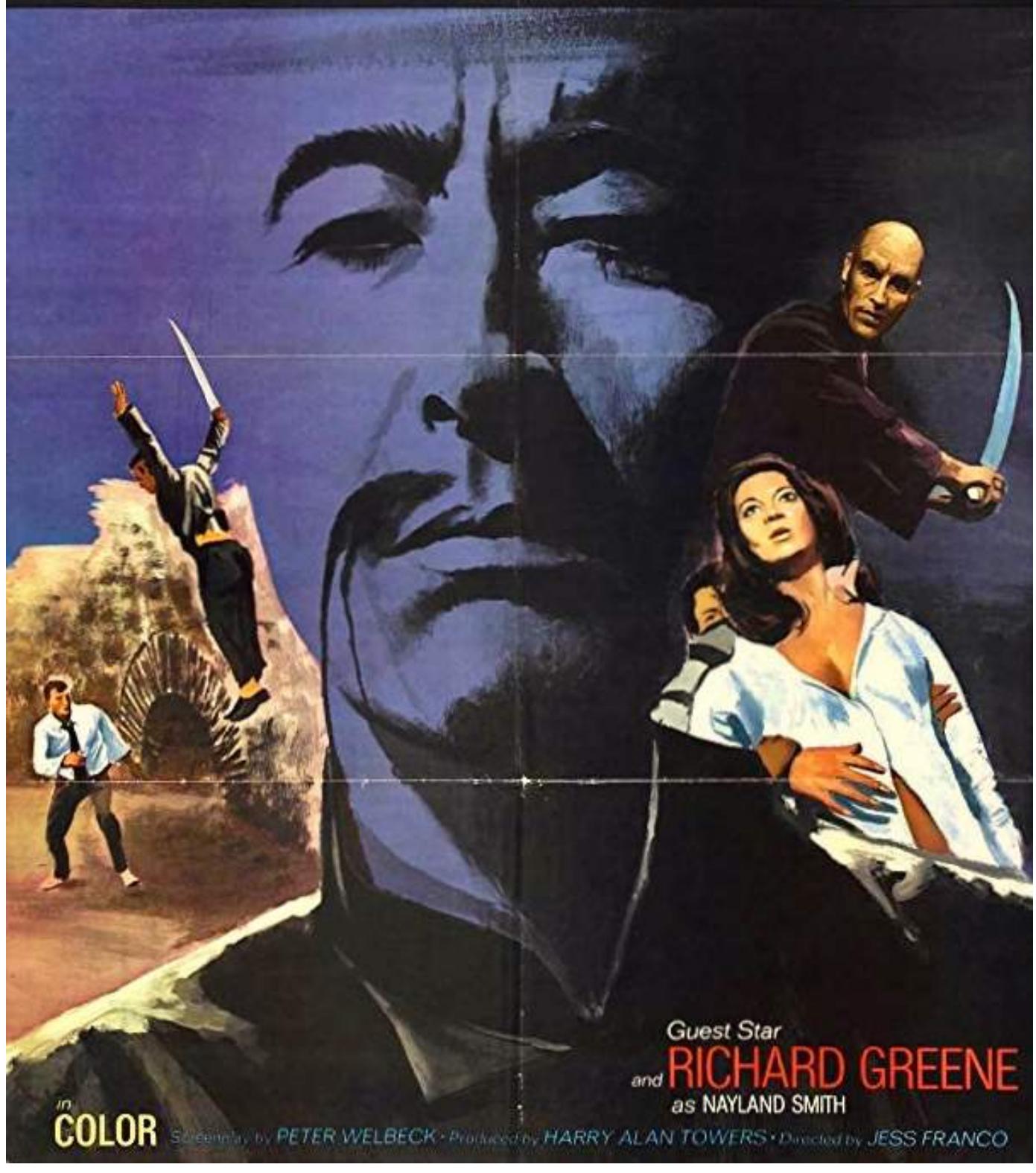


MGM PRESENTS

CHRISTOPHER LEE · TSAI CHIN · MARIA PERSCHY

in SAX ROHMER'S

THE CASTLE OF FU MANCHU



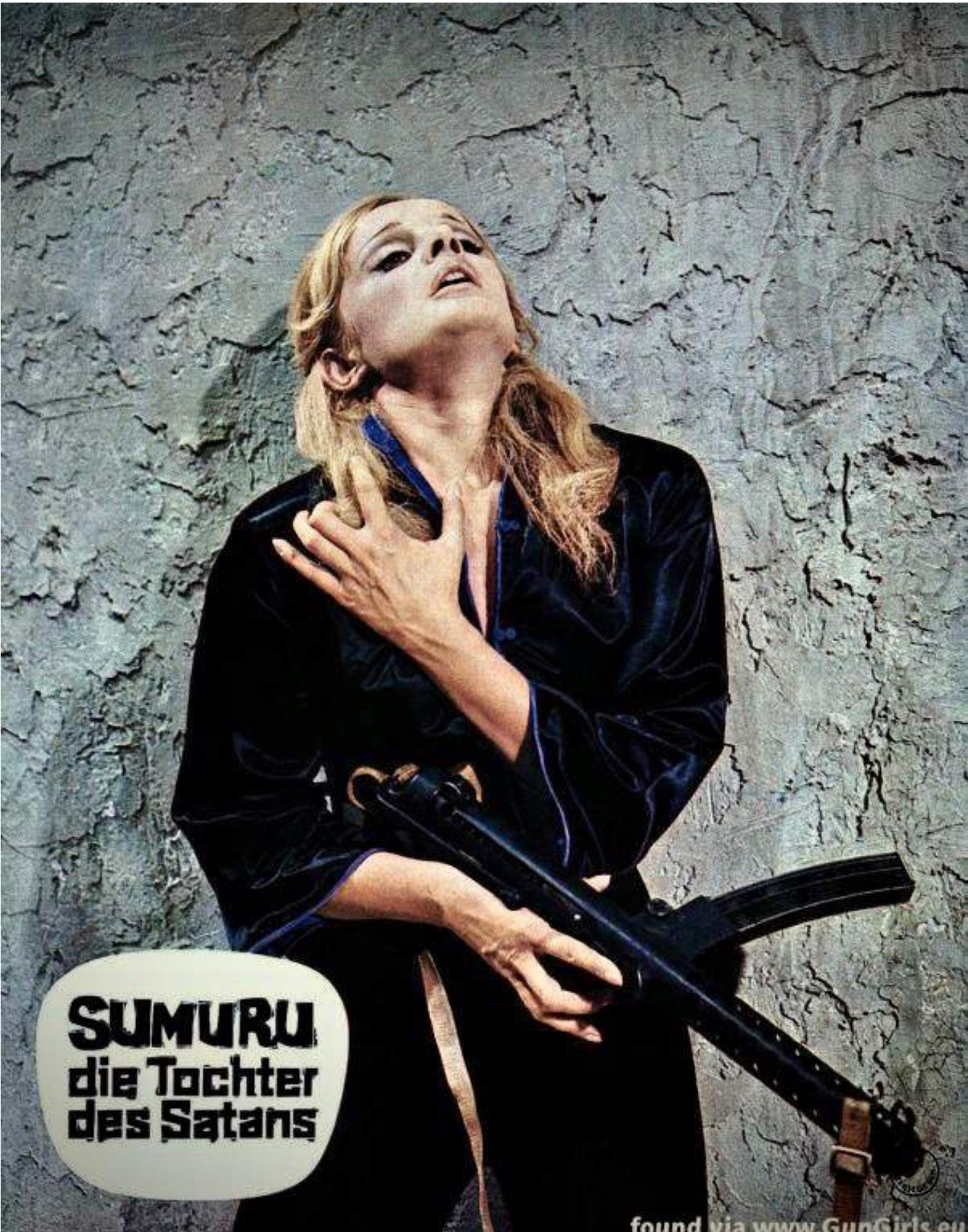
Guest Star
and **RICHARD GREENE**
as NAYLAND SMITH

in
COLOR

Screenplay by PETER WELBECK · Produced by HARRY ALAN TOWERS · Directed by JESS FRANCO



Die 13 Sklavinnen
des
DR. FU MAN CHU

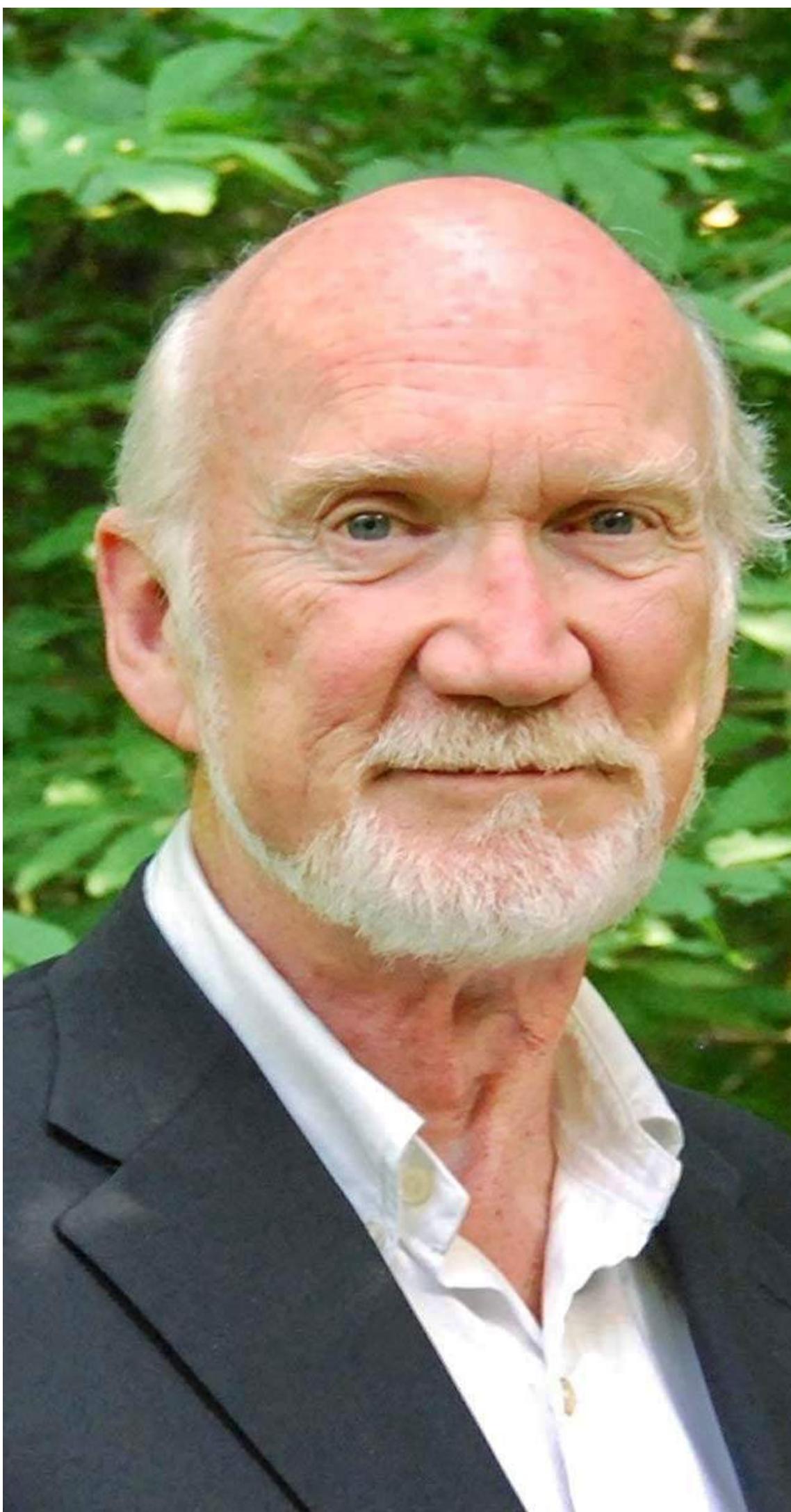


SUMURU die Tochter des Satans

found via www.GunGirls.eu



CPMC-3



CHRISTOPHER LEE

DOUGLAS WILMER
HEINZ DRACHE
MARIE VERSINI

In Sam Rohmer's

THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU





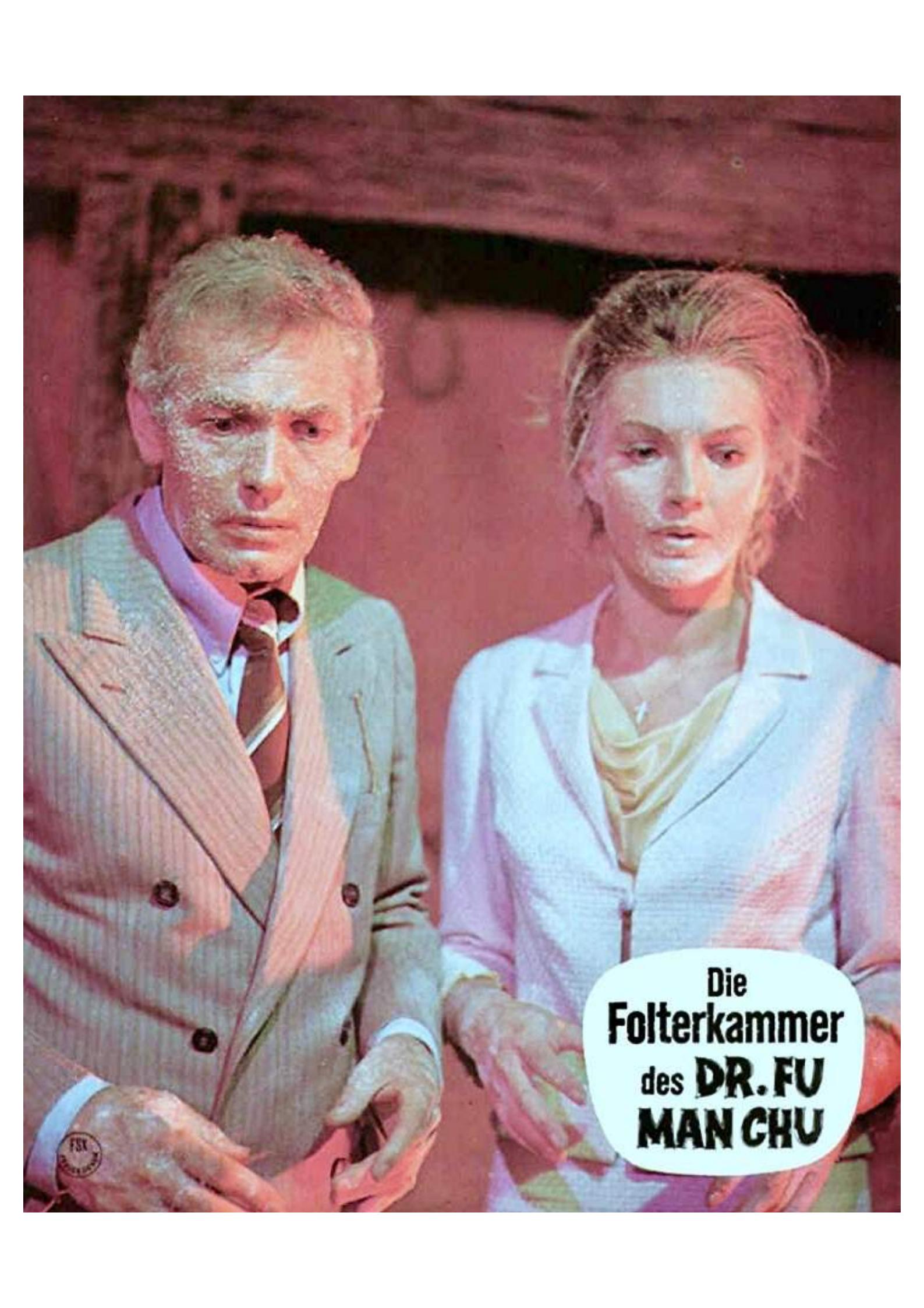
DIANA

Tochter der Wildnis

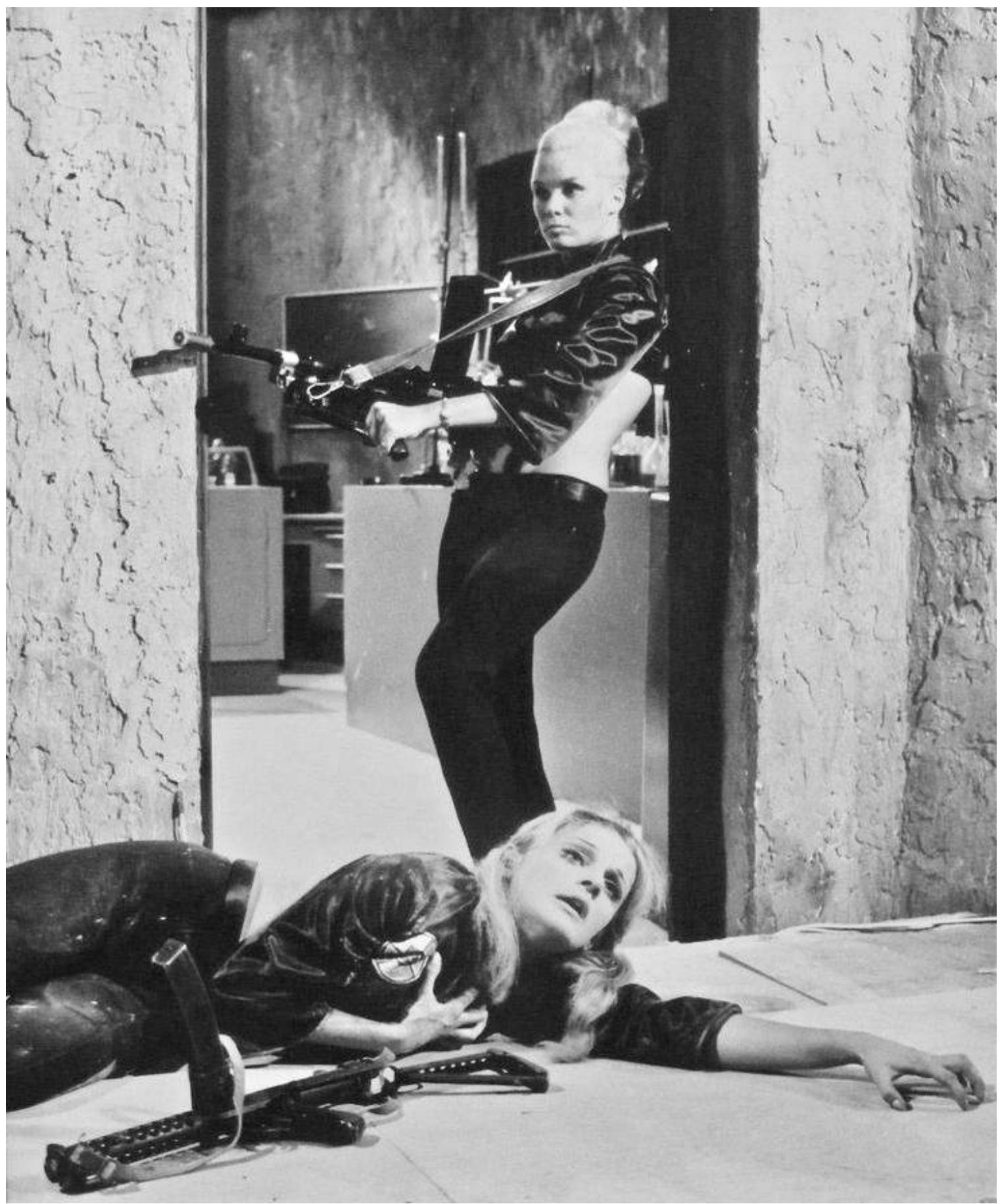


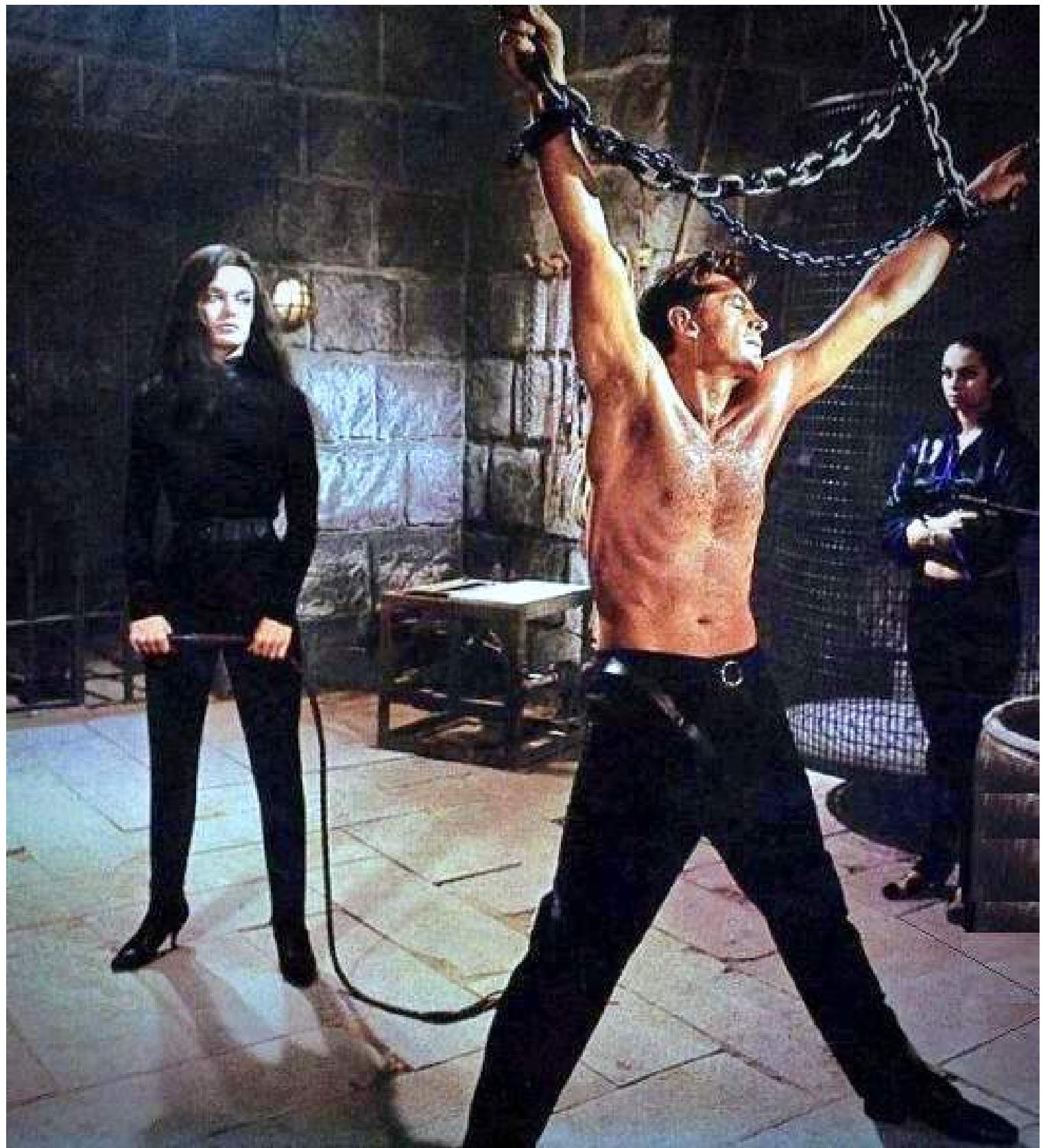
Die
Folterkammer
des **DR. FU**
MAN CHU

FSK
16

A man and a woman are standing in a room with red lighting. The man is on the left, wearing a light-colored double-breasted suit jacket, a white shirt, and a striped tie. He has a small circular badge on his cuff that says "FSK". The woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored blazer over a yellow scarf. A speech bubble containing the movie title is positioned in the lower right corner.

**Die
Folterkammer
des DR. FU
MAN CHU**





**THE MOST EVIL MAN
ON EARTH!**

CHRISTOPHER LEE
DOUGLAS WILMER
TSAI CHIN
MARIA ROHM

THE VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU

with
NOEL TREVARTHEN and HOWARD MARION CRAWFORD

Based on the books and characters created by SAX ROHMER
Screenplay by PETER WELBECK
Produced by HARRY ALAN TOWERS
Directed by JEREMY SUMMERS

EASTMAN COLOUR
From ANOLO AMALGAMATED
Released through WARNER-PATHÉ

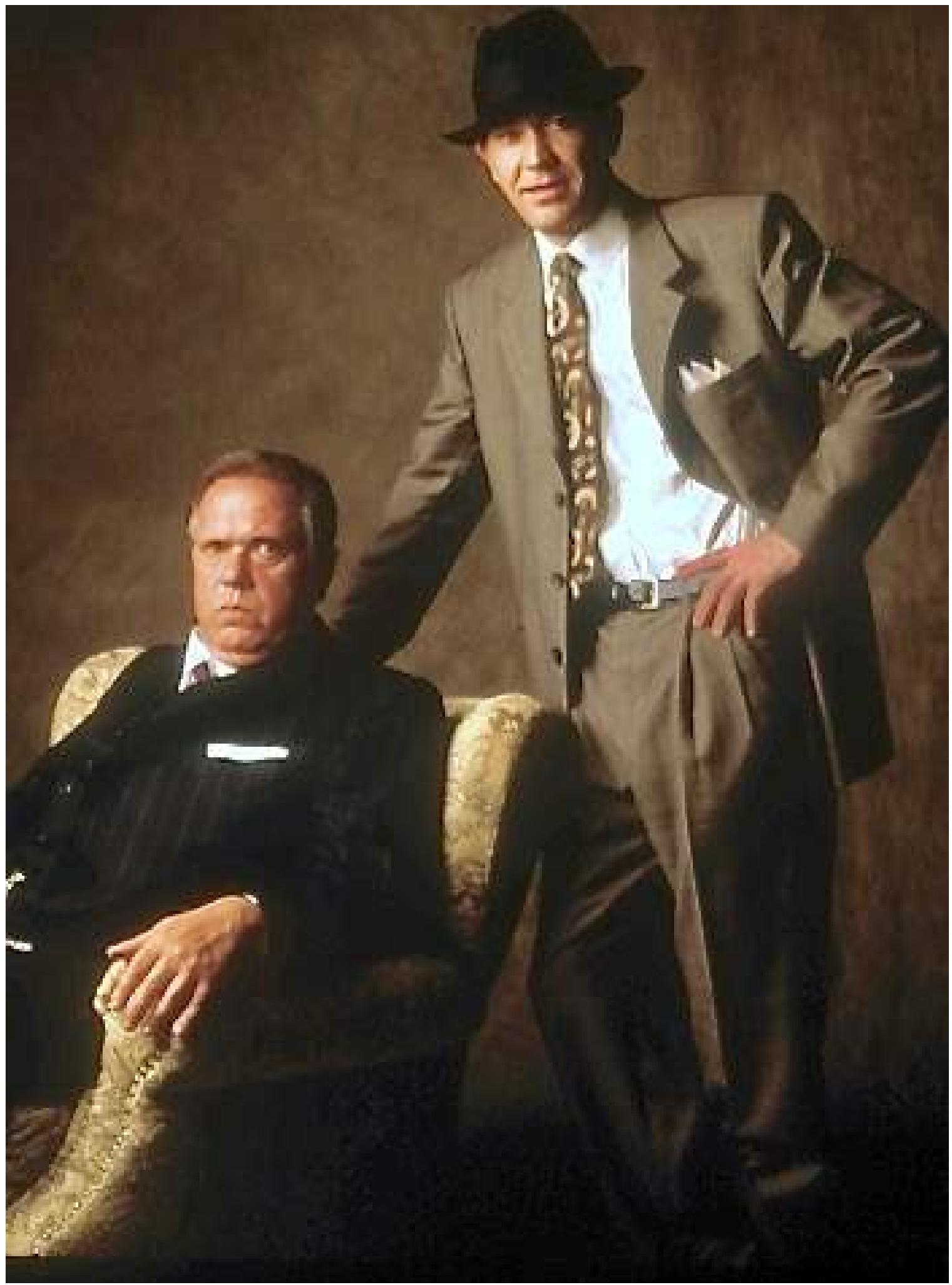


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VFM-45



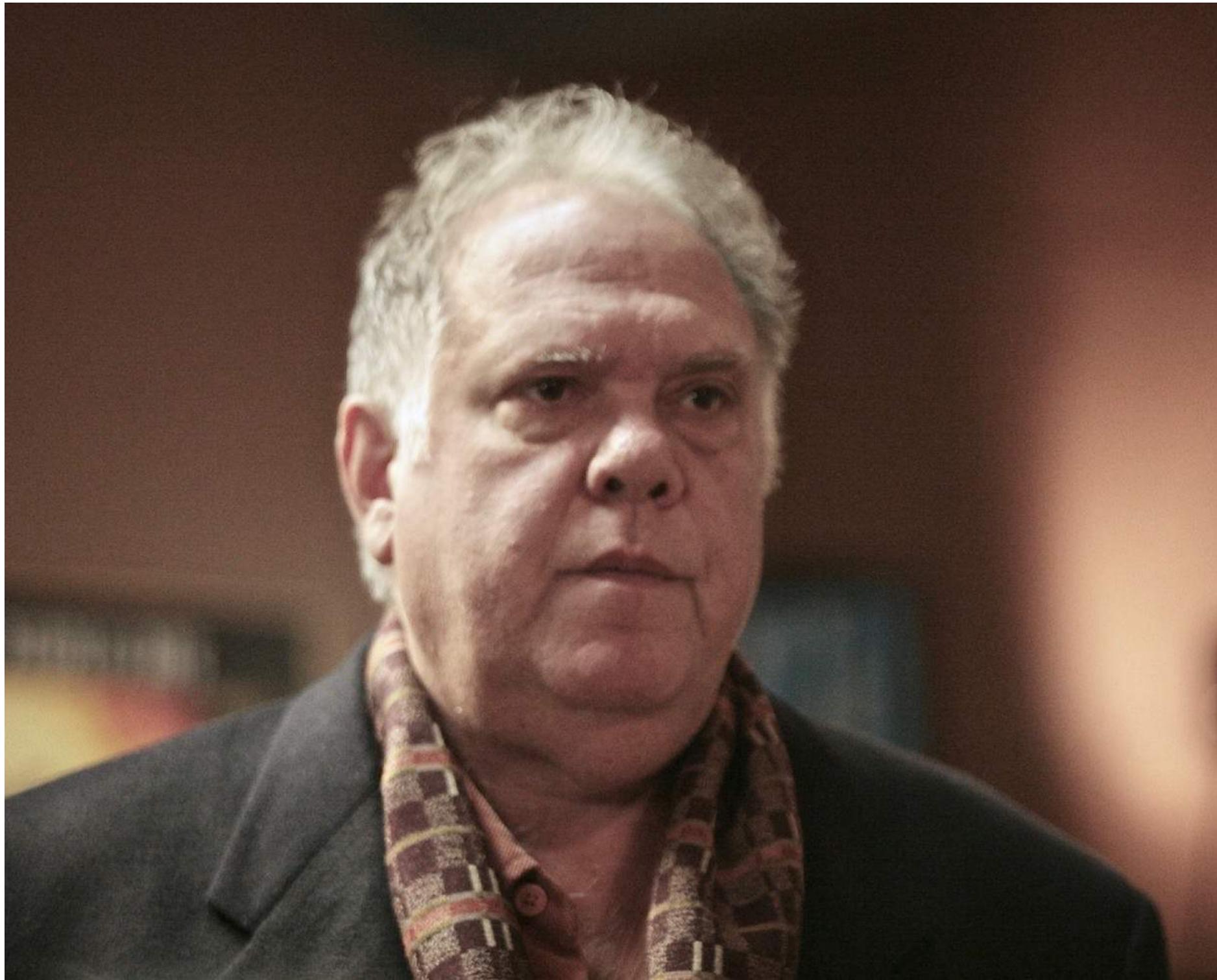




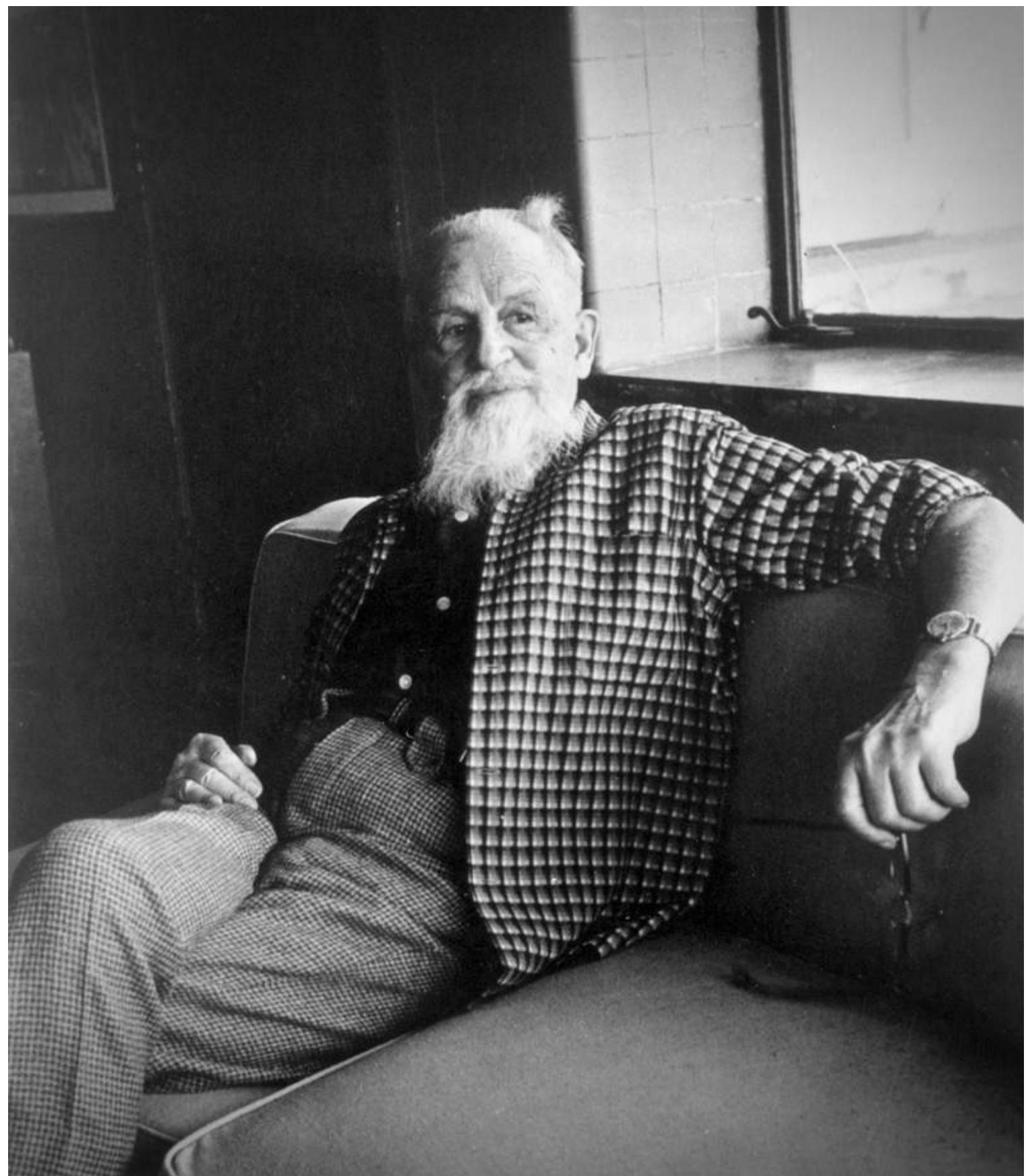


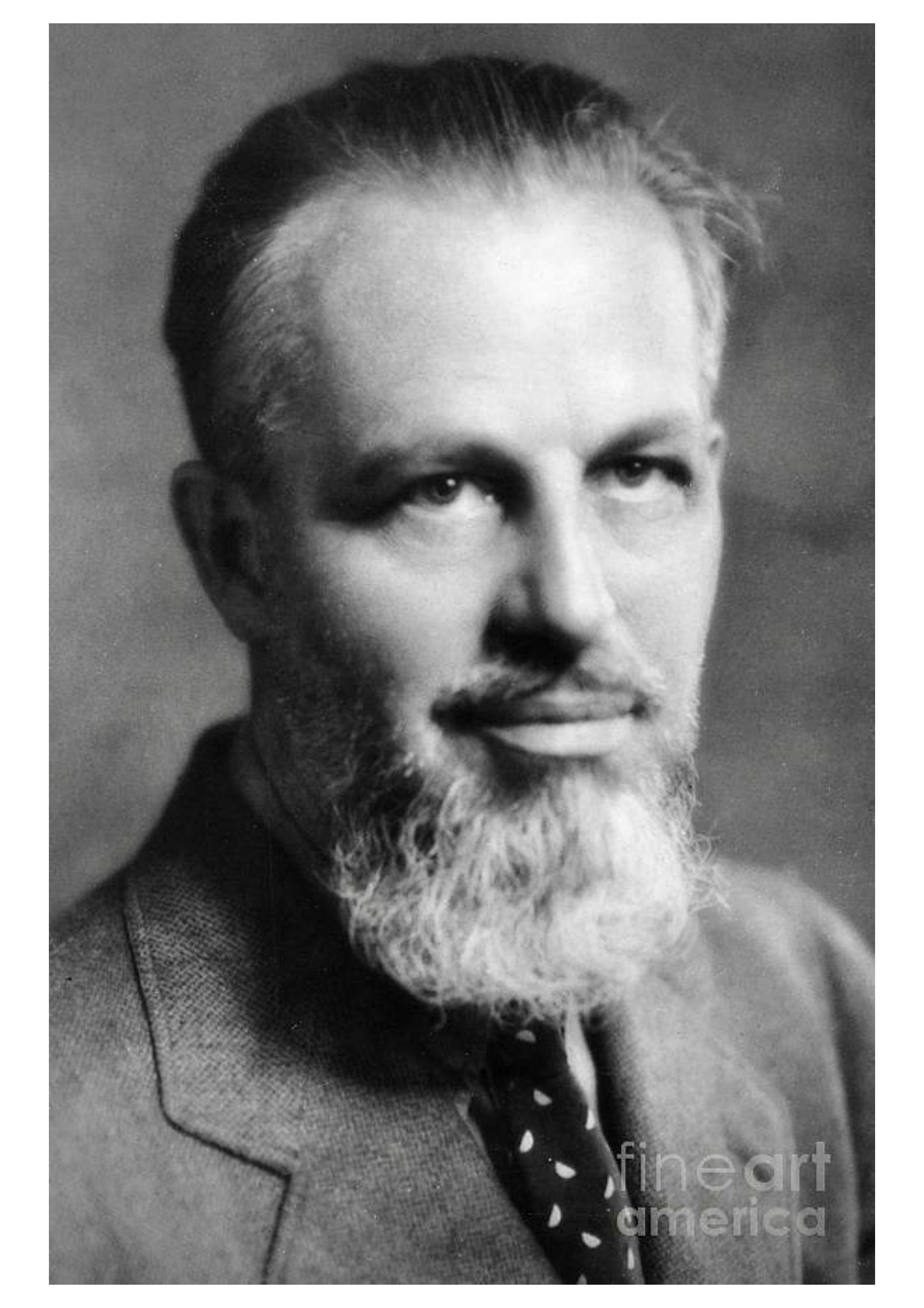


Blonde Fracht
für **SANSIBAR**









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NERO WOLDE

A FAMILY AFFAIR
BY REX STOUT

THE GRAND MASTER OF DETECTION





To
Victor & Annet







"IT'S FRESH. IT'S FUNNY. IT'S FUNKY.
IT'S THE 'STAR WARS' OF NUDIE MUSICALS.
The three stars are simply irresistible.
Cindy Williams is enchanting."

—Judith Crist

CINDY WILLIAMS

STEPHEN NATHAN

BRUCE KIMMEL

"You'll get raunchy
laughs from this wacky double
satire on pornography
and 1930's musicals.
AS DIRTY SHOWS GO,
IT'S GOOD CLEAN FUN."
—Cue N.Y.



"THE FIRST NUDIE MUSICAL"

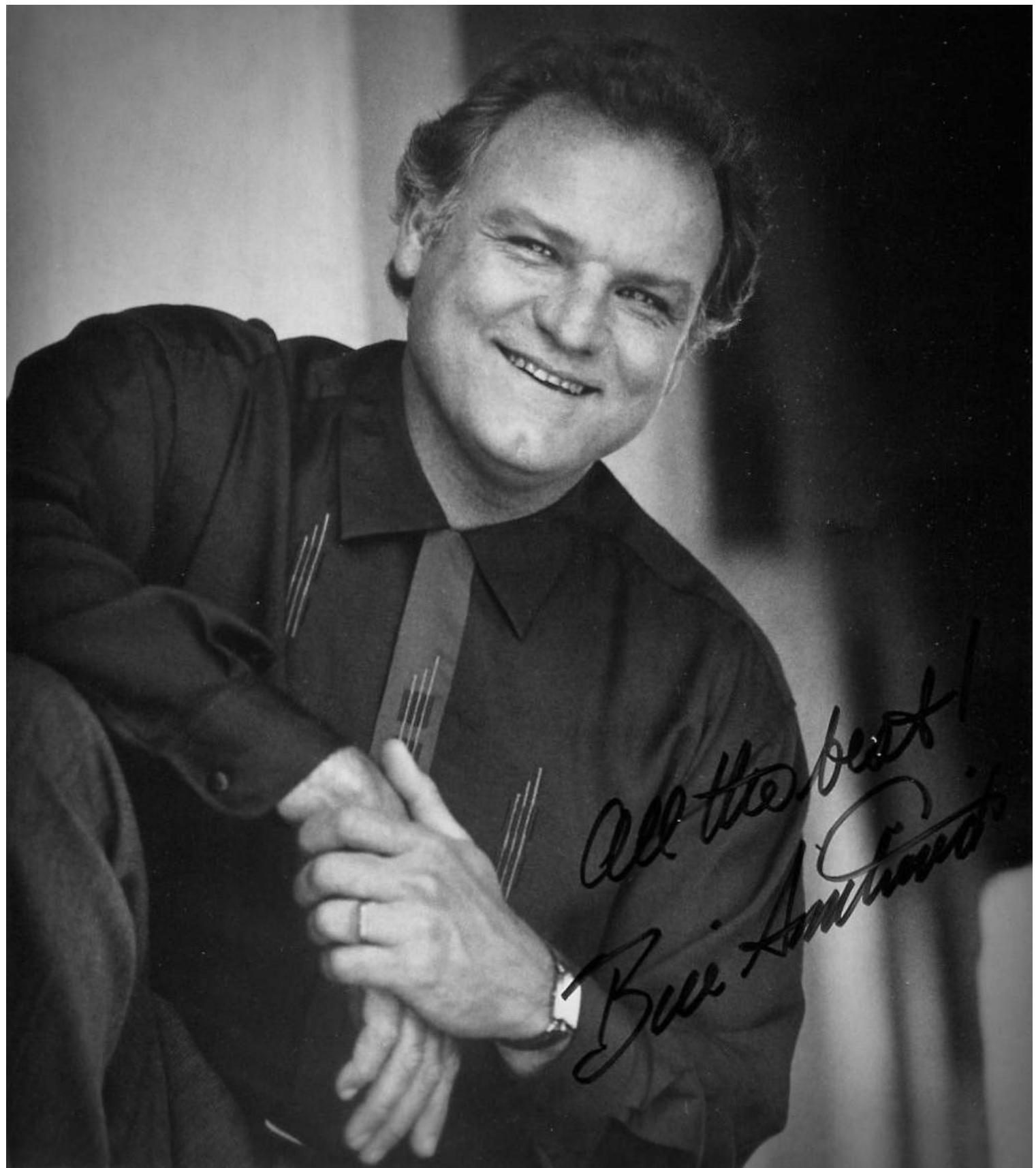
SCREENPLAY, MUSIC AND LYRICS BY BRUCE KIMMEL PRODUCED BY JACK REEVES

DIRECTED BY MARK HAGGARD AND BRUCE KIMMEL

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS STUART W. PHELPS AND PETER S. BROWN IN COLOR

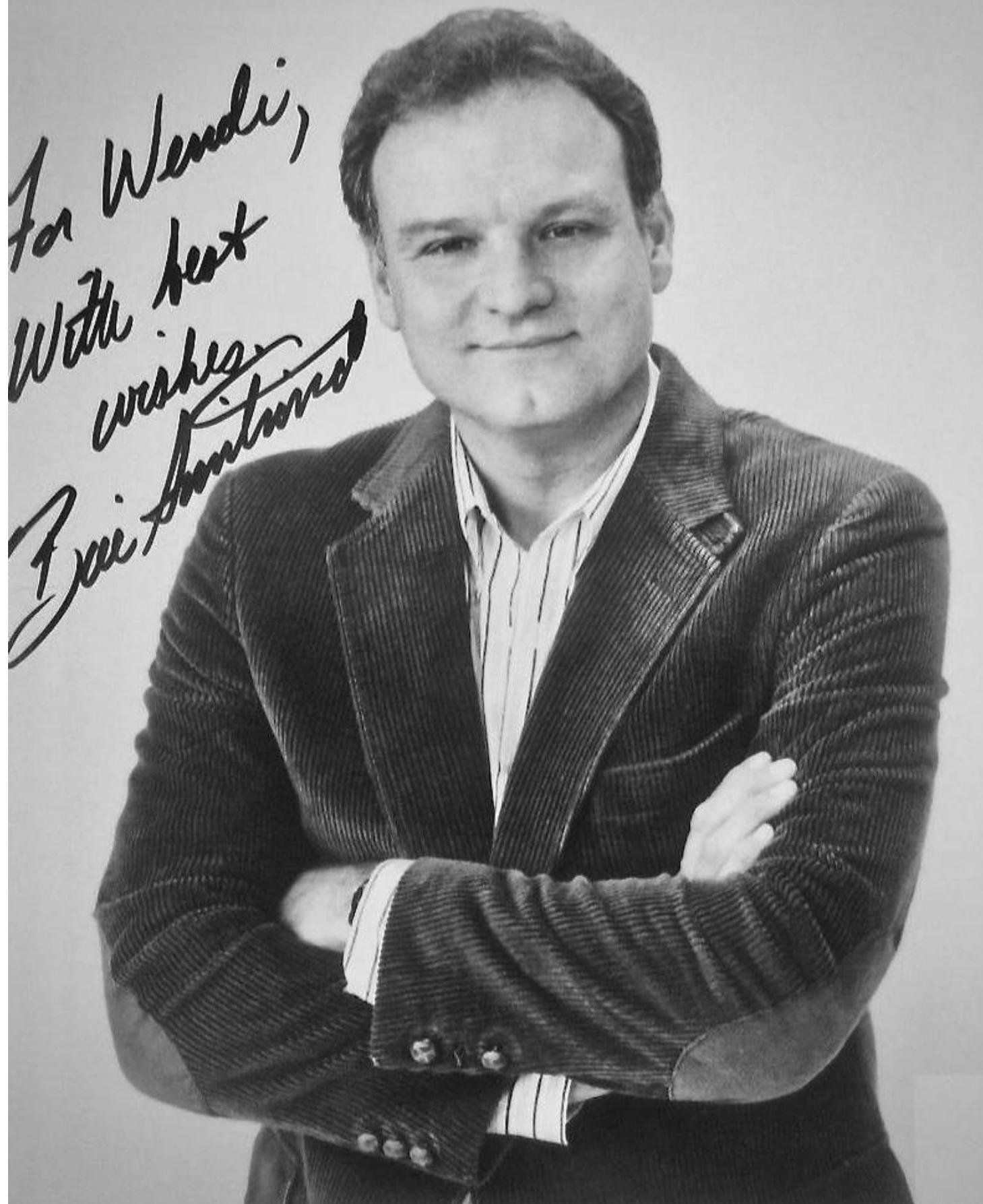
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R RESTRICTED
UNDER 17 REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING
PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN













188 Y-29







59/43.





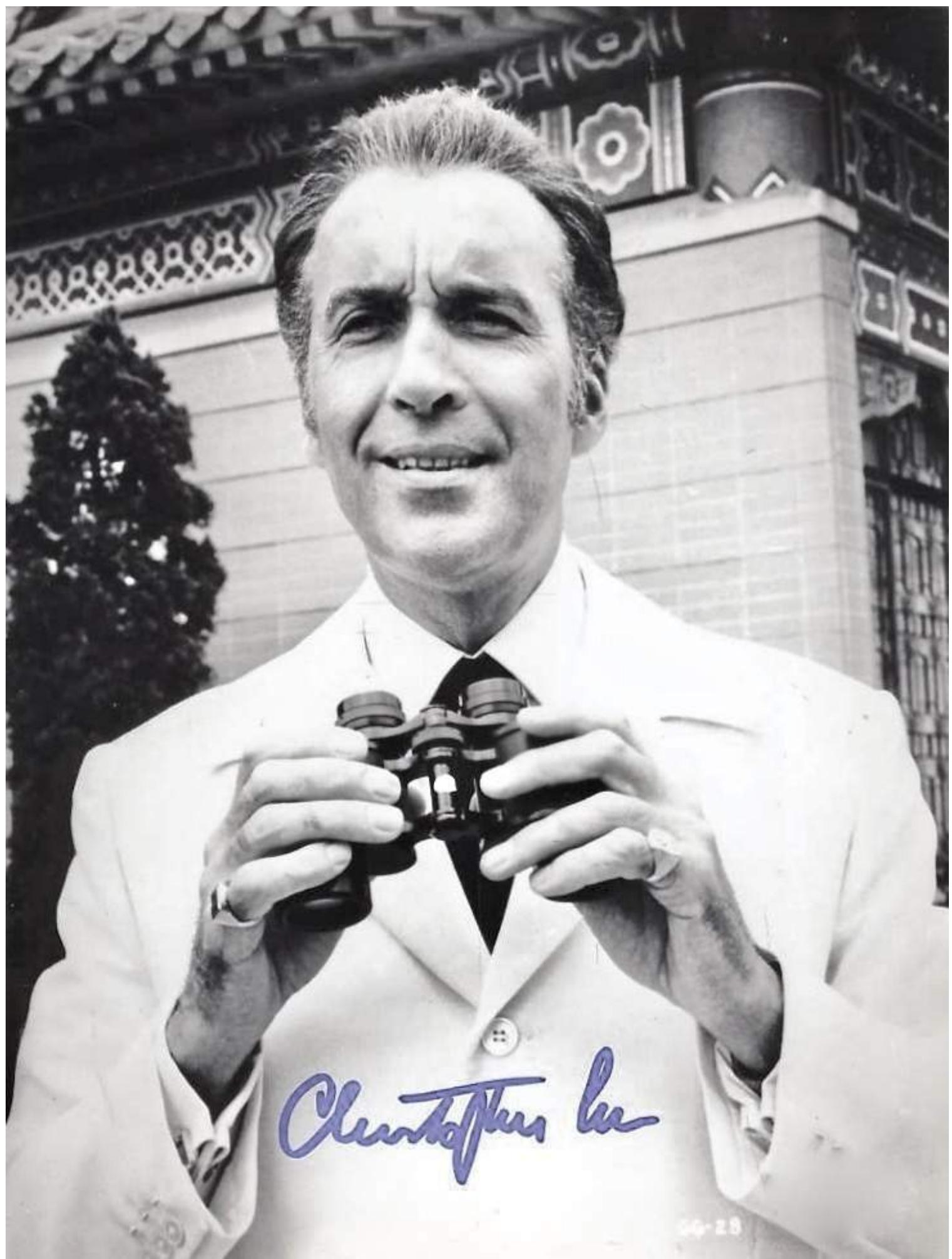










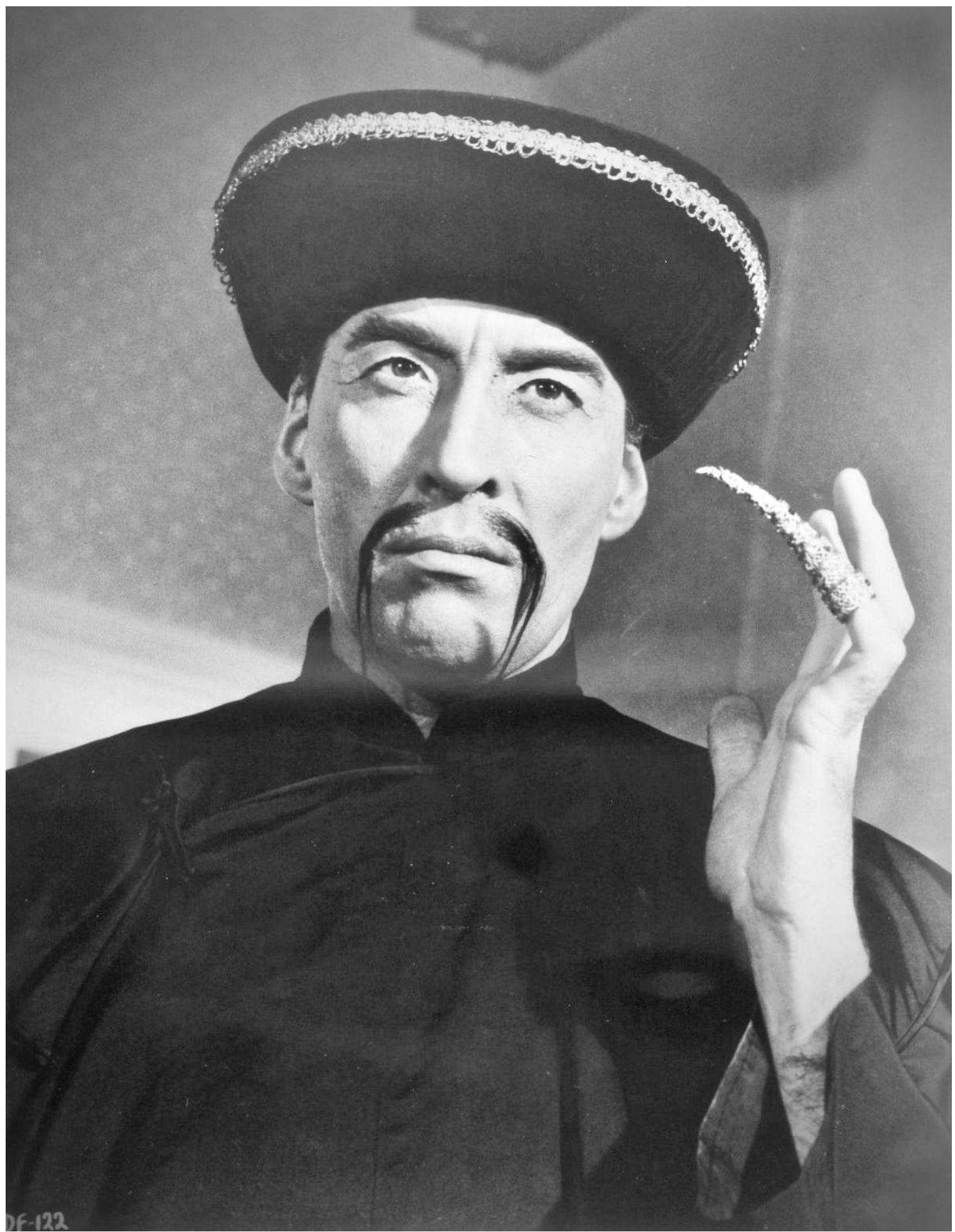


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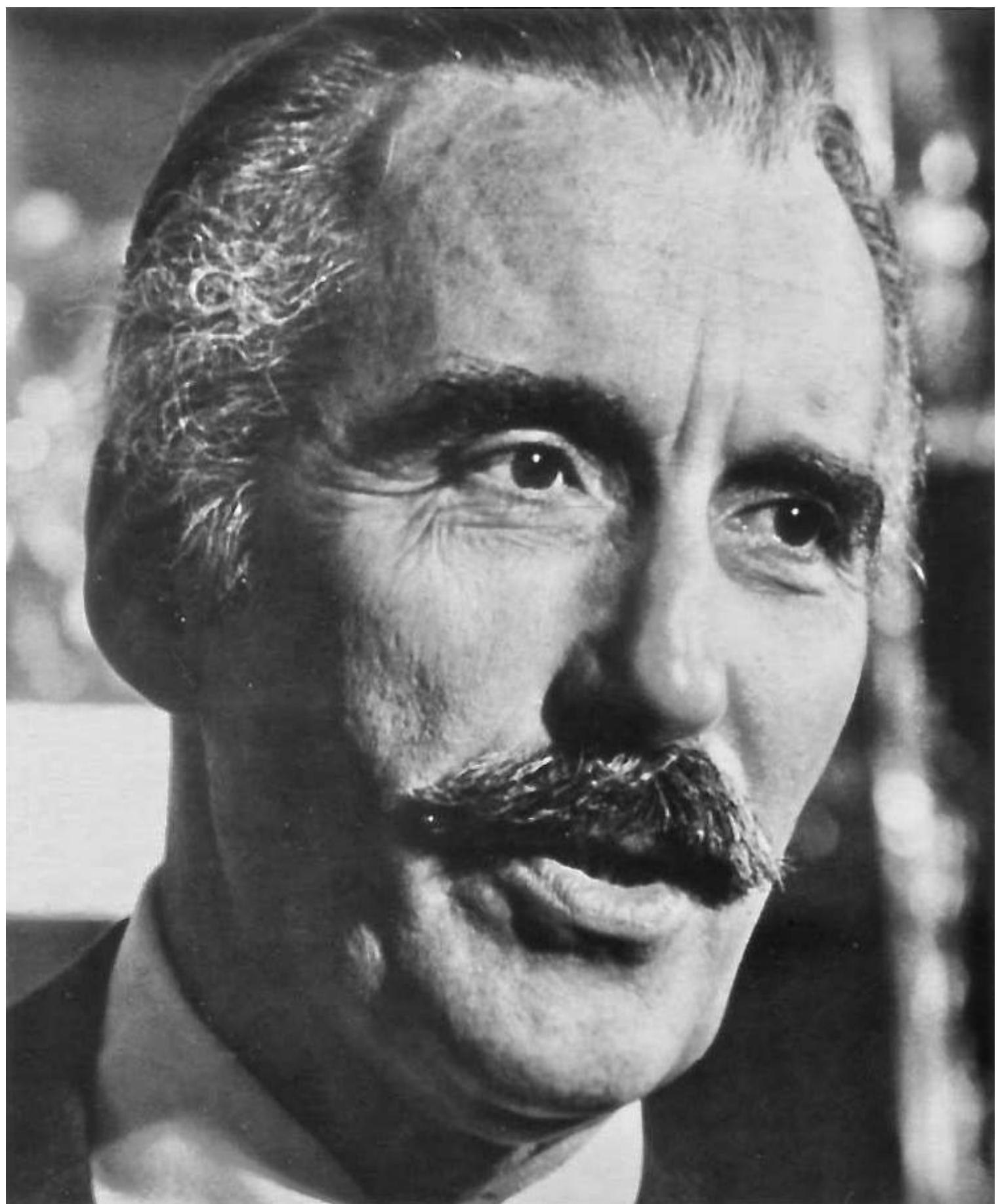








DF-122









R.P.13A



7021-7



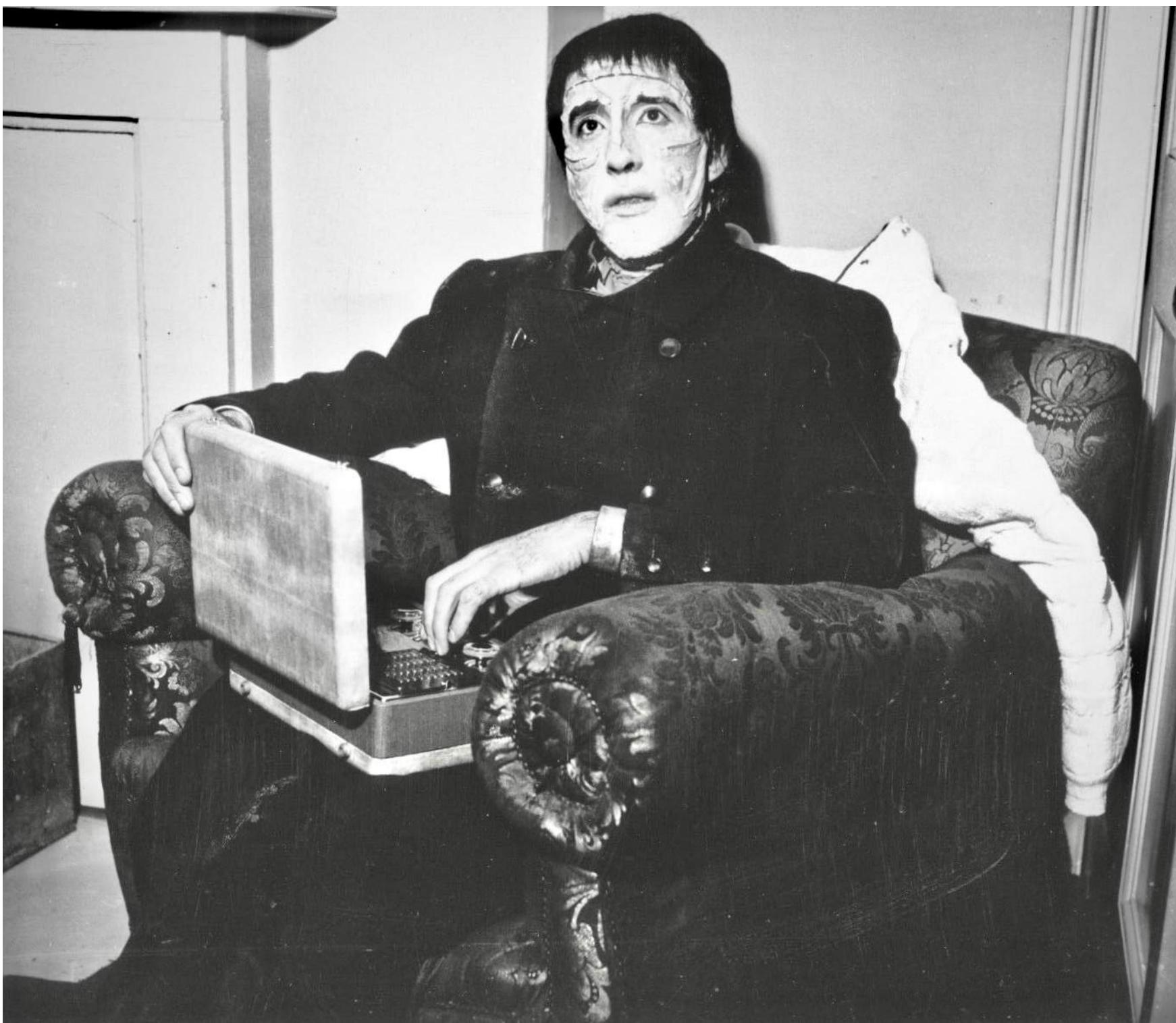
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6908-51



She Rules a Palace of Pleasure

...for WOMEN!
the most DIABOLICAL...
BIZARRE... SADISTIC
WOMAN WHO EVER LIVED!

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL presents

THE MILLION EYES OF SU-MURU

in TECHNICOLOR® and TECHNISCOPE®

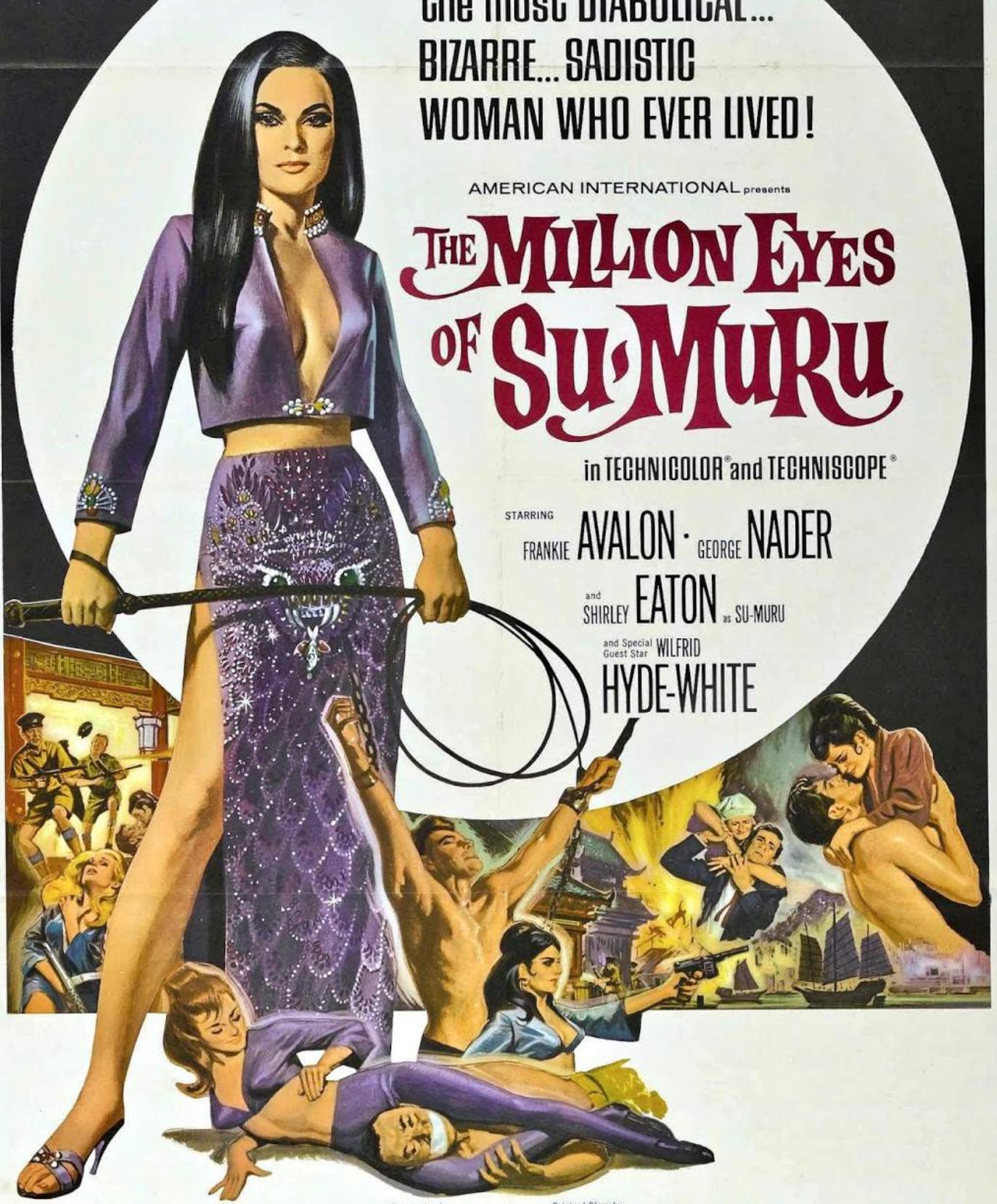
STARRING

FRANKIE AVALON · GEORGE NADER

and SHIRLEY EATON as SU-MURU

and Special Guest Star WILFRID

HYDE-WHITE



Directed by

LINDSAY SHONTEFF

Produced by

HARRY ALAN TOWERS · KEVIN KAVANAGH · PETER WELBECK · an AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL Picture

Screenplay by

Original Story by

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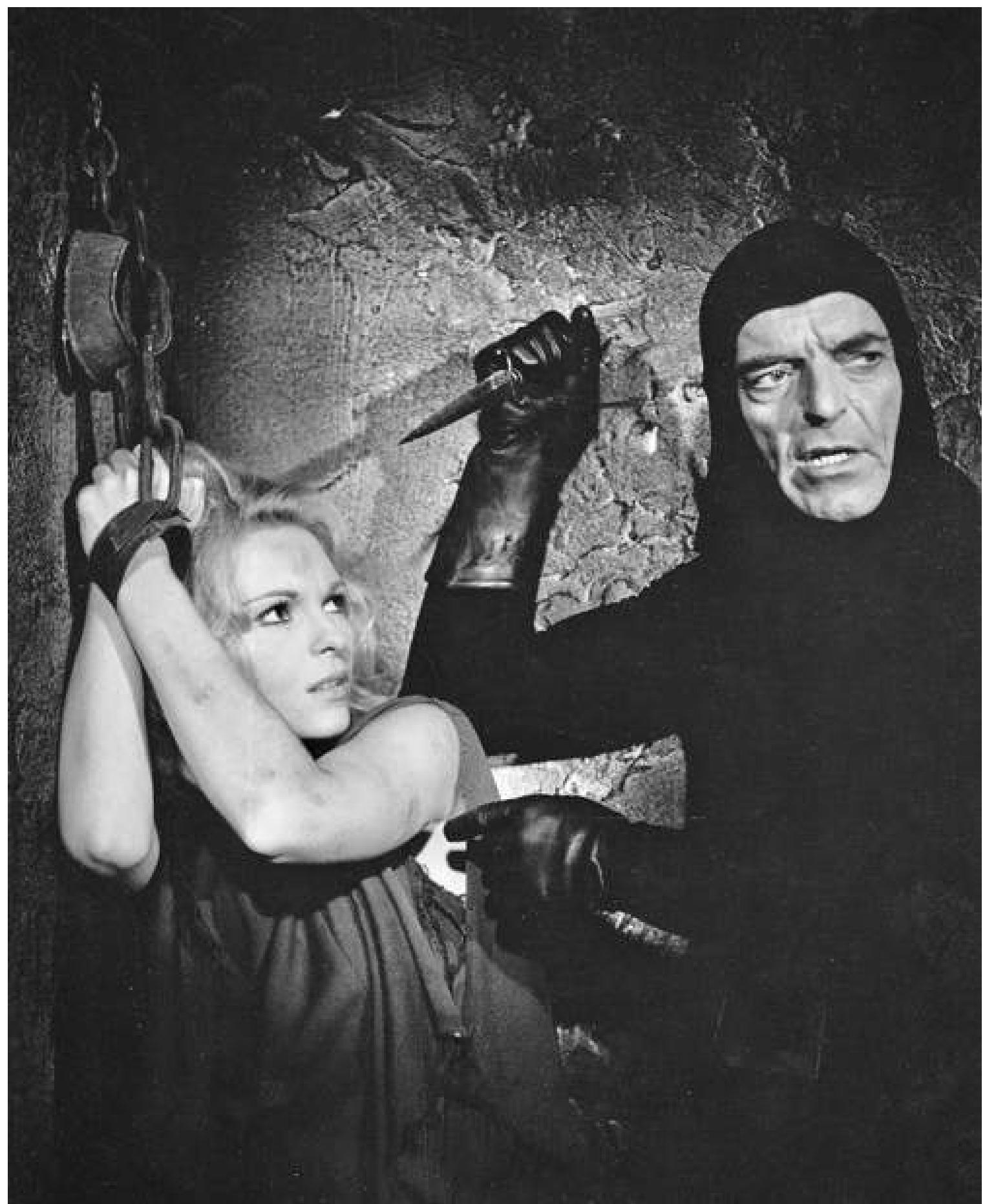












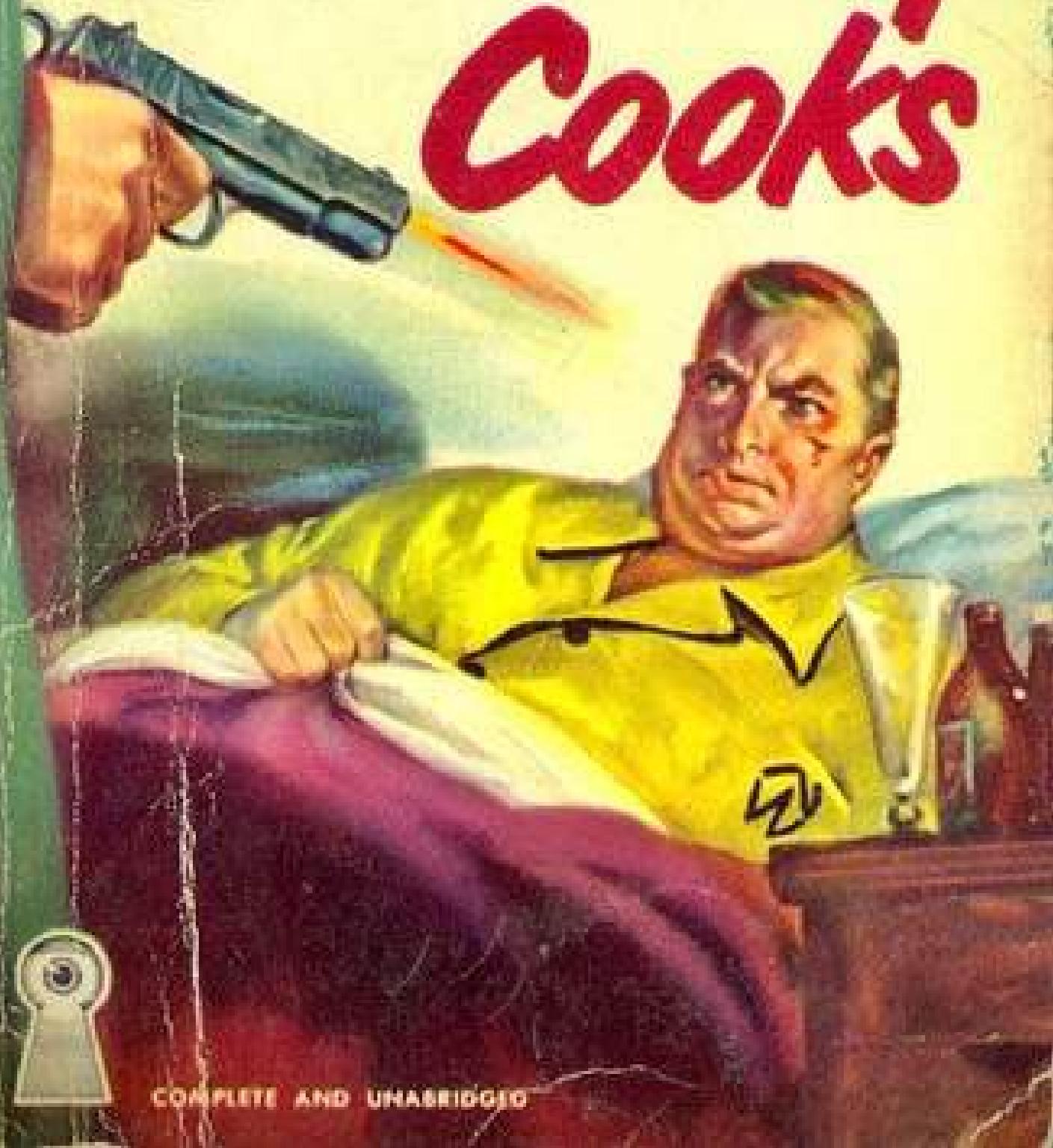
25¢

A NERO WOLFE MURDER MYSTERY

DELL
BOOKS
540

Rex Stout

Too Many Cooks



COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED



FROM WARNER BROS.-SEVEN ARTS 



Die Rache des
**DR.
FU MAN CHU**

FSK
12









